THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND,

FROM THE

INVASION OF JULIUS CÆSAR,

TO THE

DISSOLUTION of the Present PARLIAMENT,

ADORNED WITH PLATES.

IN FOURTEEN VOLUMES.

BY JOSEPH COLLYER,
Author of the NEW SYSTEM OF GEOGRAPHY,
in Two Volumes Folio.

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Exposure

THE PREFACE.

IT would be impertinent here to enter into an enumeration of all the advantages arising from the knowledge of History, and particularly that of our native Country; it is sufficient to say, that nothing has a greater tendency to open the mind, to enlarge our views, and to give us that knowledge of this kingdom, which is absolutely necessary for the Patriot, the Legislator, and the Politician; and indeed, must be of infinite advantage to every member of a free state, who claims a right to discuss political subjects, and to give his vote in the choice of Representatives of his Country.

HENCE we have a number of histories of England, already printed, several of which have great merit; but these are, in general, either too bulky, or too voluminous; and however useful to men of leisure, in many

parts are too prolix and tedious, and are apt to perplex the mind, and fatigue the memory of readers unaccuſtomed to ſtudy and cloſe reflection.

THIS Work is formed on a different plan, adapted to general uſe, both by its ſize and the moderate expence by which it will be obtained. The author will exert his endeavours to render this hiſtory both entertaining and inſtructive, by neglecting dry and uſeleſs diſquiſitions, paſſing ſwiftly over dull and unintereſting facts, and dwelling on ſuch as are curious and important.

A HISTORY of England, thus conducted, muſt afford a pleaſing and rational entertainment to perſons of both ſexes. It is a hiſtory, in which we ourſelves are concerned, as it treats of our anceſtors, and is thence adapted to put all the paſſions in motion. We here cannot view the actions of the cruel and lawleſs tyrant without indignation, nor ſee the revolutions and wars that have ſo often deſolated our native land with unconcern. Every man who loves his country, cannot help feeling his heart glow at the glorious ſtruggles of the Patriot, and the heroic atchievements of the General and naval Commander; he will give his applauſe to the former, he will follow the latter into the

the field of battle, or the immenſe ocean, and where the cauſe is juſt, will ſympathize in the triumph of the victory.

SINCE the publication of the other hiſtories of England, new lights have been thrown on different reigns, by Lord Lyttelton, the Hon. Mr. Walpole, Mrs. Macaulay, and ſeveral other authors of diſtinguiſhed reputation. Theſe lights will frequently guide our ſteps, and enable us to avoid the errors of former hiſtorians.

IN this Work the author will mention not only the wars and public tranſactions of our ſovereigns, but will give the reader, as far as can be obtained, a view of their minds, their different taſtes, their amuſements and diverſions.

HE will treat of the dreſs, the manners and cuſtoms of different ages, the progreſs of the arts and ſciences, and of the various ſteps by which we have aſcended from the barbariſm in which England was found at the invaſion of Cæſar, to our preſent degree of politeneſs.

IN every part of our Work, the ſubject will be illuſtrated by plates elegantly en-

graved, of material incidents, and of the heads of our Sovereigns.

In ſhort, as the author is ſoured by no party, and flatters himſelf that he is free from every illiberal prejudice, the reader may expect that this Hiſtory will be written with the utmoſt impartiality. He has no other object but truth and the information of the reader, and writes with the ſame candour with which he wiſhes this Work to be read.

THE

THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

BOOK I.

From the Ancient BRITONS to the NORMAN CONQUEST.

CHAP. I.

A concise Account of the Ancient BRITONS; *their Dress, Houses, Arms, Government and Religion.*

THERE is nothing more vague and uncertain than the pretended discoveries that have been made of the origin of nations. A fondness of antiquity has induced the writers of almost every country to gratify the vanity and curiosity of their fellow subjects, by tracing the beginning of their state or kingdom from the most early ages, before they could have any light from records to guide their researches, and even long before the dawn of science, or the art of writing was known among them. The writers

ters of Siam and China have repreſented thoſe kingdoms, as founded even many ages before the period when we know the earth itſelf was formed, and time itſelf began; the ſtates of Greece pretended that their firſt founders were the offspring of their gods; Rome had her Æneas, and Britain her king Lud. Neglecting therefore the pretended diſcoveries of what paſſed in ages involved in impenetrable darkneſs, we ſhall begin with the inhabitants of this iſland, as they appeared at the firſt invaſion of the Romans.

It will however be firſt neceſſary to obſerve, that it can ſcarce be doubted, that this iſland was firſt peopled by the Gauls or Celtæ from the neighbouring continent, as their language, their religion, their government and manners were nearly the ſame.

Before the invaſion of Cæſar, the inhabitants of the ſouth-eaſt parts of Britain, had by tillage and agriculture become more civilized and numerous than the reſt; but in the other parts they ſtill maintained themſelves by feeding cattle and by hunting; they painted their bodies with woad, which rendered their ſkin of a blue colour. This painting was alſo done in a variety of figures of beaſts, birds, trees, herbs, the ſun, moon and ſtars. "The Britons, ſays "Herodian, draw upon their naked bodies the "figures of animals of all kinds, which they "eſteem ſo great an ornament, that they wear "no cloaths, that theſe figures may be expoſed "to view." They were alſo fond of ornaments, and frequently wore bracelets, chains and rings.

They

They were covered with the ſkins of beaſts, which being only faſtened about the neck, on their moving their arms, expoſed to view their painted ornaments. They were proud of the length and beauty of their hair, and were at much pains in dreſſing and adorning their heads. The men ſhaved their beards, leaving only the hair on the upper lip, which they ſometimes ſuffered to grow to an inconvenient length. The appearance of the Britons will be beſt underſtood by the plate we have given of them.

They dwelt in huts made of the boughs of trees, and plaiſtered over with mud, which they reared in the foreſts and marſhes, and contained one large circular room, with a fire in the middle, around which the whole family ſlept on a continued bed of ſtraw or ruſhes on the floor. Theſe huts they eaſily ſhifted, when actuated either by the hope of plunder, the fear of an enemy, or the convenience of removing their cattle into freſh paſtures.

Their arms were a javelin, a broad ſword, a ſhort dagger, and ſharp poles pointed and hardened in the fire, and they had war-chariots, to the axle-tree of which were fixed ſharp ſcythes: theſe were generally drawn by two horſes, and contained a driver and a warrior of high rank, who, in fighting, would ſit, ſtand, run along the pole, and leap out or in as occaſion required. Their defenſive weapons were only light round targets, made of wood or wicker-work, covered with ſkins.

The Britons were not wholly unacquainted with navigation; for they had boats, whoſe keels

keels and ribs were of ſlender pieces of wood, and the ſpaces between interwoven with wickerwork, covered with ſkins.

The people were divided into many ſmall nations; and as they were inured to war, and as in general their only property was their arms and their cattle, it was impoſſible for their princes or chieftans, after they had acquired a reliſh of liberty, to eſtabliſh a deſpotic authority over them. Hence their governments, though monarchical, were free, as were likewiſe thoſe of all the Celtic nations; and the common people appear to have enjoyed more liberty than the nations of Gaul, from whom they were deſcended. Each ſtate was not only divided into factions, but was filled with jealouſy or animoſity againſt its neighbours; and while the arts of peace were in a manner unknown, war was their chief employment, and the chief object of the people's ambition.

One of the moſt conſiderable parts of their government was their religion; and here their Druids or prieſts, poſſeſſed an unlimited authority, and the people were ſlaves; for no ſpecies of ſuperſtition was ever more terrible, or more contrary to the natural rights of mankind. Beſides miniſtring at the altar, and directing all religious duties, they preſided over the education of youth; and not only enjoyed an immunity from wars and taxes, but decided all controverſies both between ſtates and private perſons, and whoever refuſed to ſubmit to their decrees was excommunicated; after which, he was refuſed the protection of the laws, debarred

all

all intercourſe with his fellow citizens, and his company was univerſally ſhunned as profane and dangerous. The Druids inculcated the doctrine of tranſmigration of ſouls, and by that means extended their authority as far as the fears of their timorous votaries. They practiſed their rights in the gloom of thick ſhady groves, or other ſecret receſſes. They had originally no temples, for they held it impious and abſurd to confine and circumſcribe the preſence of their gods within narrow walls; but at length they raiſed a kind of ſtructures, which were open at the top, and generally conſiſted of rude ſtone pillars of an amazing ſize, placed in a circular form, with the altar in the middle. They payed divine honours to Taranus or Taramis, Heſus, Belenus and Teutates, who are ſuppoſed to be Jupiter, Mars, Apollo and Mercury. They had the barbarous cuſtom of offering human victims, and carried their ſavage cruelty to ſuch a length, as to form wicker coloſſuſes of a monſtrous ſize in the human form, in which were incloſed a great number of perſons, whom they burnt alive, as a ſacrifice to their gods; and theſe unhappy wretches were generally malefactors, or priſoners taken in arms. The ſpoils of war were often devoted to their deities, and thoſe were puniſhed with the ſevereſt tortures, who dared to ſecrete any part of the conſecrated offering; theſe ſacred treaſures were kept in woods, where they were ſecured by no other guard than the terrors of their religion.

They had the utmoſt veneration for the oak, and had an extraordinary eſteem for the miſſleto which

which grows upon it. Upon particular days the chief Druid, cloathed in white, aſcended one of thoſe trees amidſt an infinite concourſe of people, and with a conſecrated golden pruning-hook cropped the miſsleto, which he received in the ſkirt of his white robe; after which they offered two white bulls, and with frequent invocations, entreated the all-healing deity to render it efficacious in the diſtempers in which it was adminiſtered.

The Druids adored their Gods in prayers and hymns, which laſt were ſung in concert, accompanied with the muſic of their harps; and upon ſtated feſtivals were attended with interludes, dancing, feaſting, and public games. The hymns were at firſt compoſed by the Druids, but were at length made by the Bards, who were likewiſe the preſervers of the memory and noble exploits of their heroes.

CHAP. II.

Of the Invaſion of the ROMANS, *and their Proceedings in this Iſland till they finally left it.*

LONG had the Britons remained in this rude ſtate, when Cæſar caſt his eyes on their iſland, and being ambitious of carrying his arms into a new world, then but little known, reſolved to take advantage of a ſhort interval in his Gaulic wars to invade Britain. The natives, being informed of his deſign, in vain endeavoured to appeaſe him by ſubmiſſions. After their making a vigorous reſiſtance, in which they exerted the utmoſt valour, he landed,

Vol. I. pa. 32.

A ROMAN. A BRITON.
From Speed.

ed, as is ſuppoſed, at Deal, in the 55th year before the birth of Chriſt, and having obtained ſeveral advantages over the Britons, and obliged them to promiſe to ſend him hoſtages for their future obedience, he returned with his forces into Gaul.

The Britons, now relieved from the terror of his arms, diſregarded their ſtipulations, and the next ſummer he landed with a greater force to chaſtiſe them for this breach of treaty.—Though the Britons were united under Caſſivelaunus, one of their petty princes, under whom Cæſar met with a more regular reſiſtance, he defeated them in every engagement. He advanced into the country, took and burned Caſſivelaunus's capital, and, having obliged the Britons to make him new ſubmiſſions, again returned with his army into Gaul, leaving the authority of the Romans in this iſland more nominal than real.

Britain now continued free from the devaſtations of the Romans, till, in the year of our Lord 43, the emperor Claudius, reſolving to reduce this country under the dominion of the Romans, ſent over Plautius, an able general, with an army, who gained ſome victories, and made a conſiderable progreſs in ſubduing the Britons. Soon after, Claudius came over himſelf, and received the ſubmiſſion of the Atrebates, Cantii, Regni, and Trinobantes, Britiſh ſtates, who inhabited the ſouth-eaſt parts of the iſland, whoſe poſſeſſions and cultivated lands induced them to purchaſe peace at the expence of their liberty; while the other Britons,

tons, under the command of Caractacus, ſtill maintained an obſtinate reſiſtance; till, in the year 50, Oſtorius Scapula was ſent over to command the Roman army. This general pierced into the country of the Silures, who inhabited the banks of the Severn; defeated the brave Caractacus in a great battle; took him priſoner, and ſent him and his family to Rome, where, from his bold and magnanimous behaviour, he received better treatment than thoſe conquerors uſually gave to captive princes.

Britain, however, was not yet ſubdued, and military honour being ſtill to be acquired there, the emperor Nero, in the year 59, inveſted Suetonius Paulinus with the command, who finding that the iſland of Mona, now Angleſea, was the chief ſeat of the Druids, and, being the center of their ſuperſtition, afforded protection to all their baffled forces, he reſolved to ſubdue it. The Britons endeavoured both by the force of their arms, and the terrors of their religion, to prevent his landing. The women with their hair diſhevelled, and the prieſts, intermingled with the ſoldiers, ran about the ſhore with flaming torches in their hands, and by their howlings, cries, and execrations, ſtruck the aſtoniſhed Romans with terror. But Suetonius, by exhorting his troops to deſpiſe the menaces of ſuperſtition, impelled them to the attack, drove the Britons off the field, burned the Druids in the ſame fires which thoſe prieſts had prepared for their captive enemies, deſtroyed all the conſecrated groves and altars, and, having thus triumphed over their religion,

gion, he imagined, that for the future it would be eaſy for him to reduce the people to ſubjection. But he was miſtaken. The Britons, taking advantage of his abſence, were all in arms, inflamed at the baſe injuries offered to Boadicea, queen of the Iceni, who was at their head, and had been treated in the moſt ignominious and cruel manner by the Roman tribunes, they had already ſucceſsfully attacked ſeveral of the ſettlements of their inſolent conquerors. Suetonius now haſted to the protection of London, which was already a flouriſhing city; but on his arrival found it neceſſary, for the general ſafety, to abandon it to the fury of the enraged enemy. London was reduced to aſhes, the inhabitants maſſacred, and the Romans and ſtrangers, amounting to 70,000, were without diſtinction put to the ſword. But this ſlaughter Suetonius ſoon revenged in a deciſive battle, in which there are ſaid to have periſhed 80,000 Britons, when Boadicea eſcaped by flight, but, to prevent her falling into the hands of her enraged conqueror, put an end to her life by poiſon.

Suetonius was ſoon after recalled, and was ſucceeded in the command by Cerealis and Julius Frontinus, who ſucceſſively kept up the terror of the Roman arms: but the dominion of the Romans in this iſland was finally eſtabliſhed by Julius Agricola, who was governor here during the reigns of Veſpaſian, Titus, and Domitian. That great commander carried his victorious arms northward, pierced into the foreſts and mountains of Caledonia, reduced

every ſtate in the ſouthern parts of the iſland to ſubjection, and chaſed before him all the men of bold and untractable ſpirits, who preferred war and death to ſervitude. In ſhort, he defeated them in a deciſive battle, which they fought under Galgacus, their leader, and having formed a chain of garriſons between the friths of Clyde and Forth, ſecured the Roman province from the incurſions of the barbarous inhabitants of the ruder and more barren parts of the iſland. In the mean time he did not neglect the arts of peace; but introduced laws and civility among the Britons, taught them to deſire and raiſe all the conveniences of life, inſtructed them in letters and ſcience, reconciled them to the Roman language and manners, and by every means endeavoured to render the chains he had forged for them eaſy and agreeable. Thus the Britons, acquieſcing in the government of their conquerors, whom they could no longer reſiſt, became gradually incorporated as a part of the Roman empire.

Britain, now completely ſubdued, gave no farther diſturbance to the victor. Caledonia alone, defended by its barren mountains, and by the contempt which the Romans entertained for it, ſometimes made incurſions into the more cultivated parts of the iſland. The better to ſecure the frontiers on that ſide, Adrian, who came hither, built a wall from the Tyne to the frith of Solway: Lollius Urbicus, under Antoninus Pius, erected one where Agricola had formerly eſtabliſhed his garriſons; and Severus, who afterwards made an expedition into Britain,

tain, added new fortifications to the wall of Adrian. During the reigns of the following emperors, ſuch a profound tranquillity reigned in Britain, that the only incidents mentioned by hiſtorians are ſome ſeditions of the Roman legions quartered there, and ſome uſurpations of the imperial dignity by the Roman governors; for the natives had loſt all deſire and even idea of their ancient liberty.

The period now came, when the immenſe Roman empire itſelf began to approach towards its diſſolution. In the reign of Arcadius and Honorius, the northern barbarians aſſailed at once all the frontiers of that empire, and having ſatiated their avidity by plunder, reſolved to ſettle in the waſted provinces. The emperors now recalled the diſtant legions for the defence of the capital and center of the empire, and thoſe in Britain were carried over for the protection of Italy and Gaul. That iſland, though ſecured by the ſea againſt the inroads of the greater tribes of barbarians, found enemies on its frontiers, who took advantage of its preſent defenceleſs ſtate: the Picts and Scots, who dwelt in the northern parts, beyond the wall of Antoninus, made incurſions on their peaceable and now effeminate neighbours, and threatened to bring the whole ſouthern part of the iſland into ſubjection, or, what was ſtill more dreaded, with plunder and devaſtation.

The Picts, who were ſo called from their painting their bodies, ſeem to have been a tribe of the ancient Britons, who, on their being chaſed into the northern parts by the conqueſts

of Agricola, had there intermingled with the native inhabitants: the Scots appear to have been derived from the ſame Celtic origin, who, having been firſt eſtabliſhed in Ireland, had ſent over a colony to the north-weſt coaſts of this iſland, and had long been accuſtomed to infeſt the Roman province. Theſe tribes ſoon broke through the Roman wall, now no longer defended by the Romans, and, though in themſelves a contemptible enemy, met with little reſiſtance from the peaceable inhabitants; who, inſtead of exerting their own ſtrength, ſent to Rome for aſſiſtance, and one legion was ſent over for their protection. This force was an overmatch for the barbarians, whom they defeated in every engagement; and, having driven them into their ancient limits, returned in triumph. Their retreat bringing on a new invaſion, the Britons again applied to Rome, and again obtained the aſſiſtance of a legion, which produced the ſame relief. But the Romans, now reduced to extremities at home, informed them, that they could no longer give them aſſiſtance, and, as they were now their own maſters, they ought to arm in their own defence, and maintain their independence by their valour: but, before they departed, they aſſiſted the Britons in rebuilding the wall of Severus; and, having done them this good office, took their final leave of Britain, about the year 448, after being near four centuries in the poſſeſſion of the moſt conſiderable part of the iſland.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

On the Improvements in Britain, and the Progress of the Arts in this Period.

THE face of the country made a very different appearance, when it was firſt invaded by the Romans, from what it did when they left it. The whole country was in a manner overrun with woods; the Romans made cuts through them ſo broad, as to prevent their being in danger from the ſallies of the Britons, and afterwards cleared away much greater quantities of them for the ſake of agriculture. Several parts of the country were filled with bogs and marſhes, many of which the Romans drained, made ſolid roads through the whole kingdom, and built bridges where they were neceſſary. By theſe ſalutary works they not only made an agreeable alteration in the face of the country, and gained great quantities of land for paſturage and agriculture, but rendered the air more ſerene and dry, and more pleaſant and healthy, than it had been in its natural uncultivated ſtate.

The Britons in this period changed their appearance, and inſtead of ſkins wore a ſquare piece of thick cloth, not unlike the rugs for beds, which covered the body both before and behind, and was faſtened upon the breaſt or one ſhoulder with a claſp or ſkewer. Theſe being inconvenient in hot weather, the Britiſh weavers, on becoming more expert, made a finer ſort for ſummer, and on their learning the art of dying, had them in ſtripes chequer-wiſe *,

* Diod. Sicul. lib. 5. c. 30. p. 353.

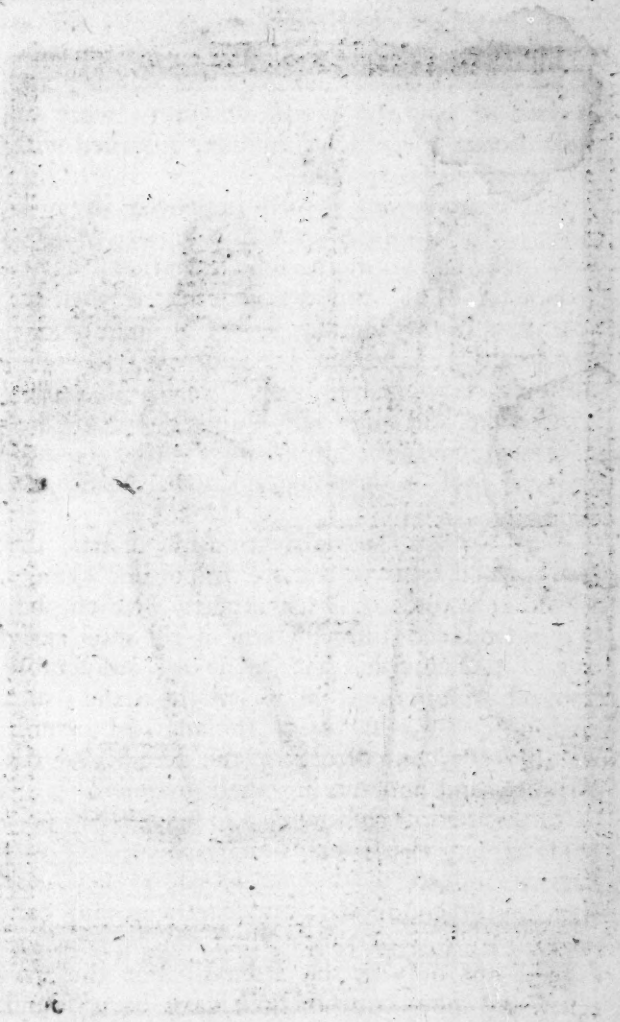
ſome-

ſomewhat like the tartan plads of Scotland. This continued long their only dreſs, till at length they wore a cloſe tunic, and a garment which covered both their legs and thighs; and in time of war the Britiſh chieftains wore on their heads a kind of helmet, adorned with plumes of eagles feathers.

The Britons were greatly improved in agriculture, in building, and in a variety of arts. From the year 80 to the fourth century, architecture, and all the arts connected with it, flouriſhed in this iſland. Every Roman colony and free city in Britain was adorned with temples, palaces, courts, halls, obeliſks, baths, aqueducts, and other fine buildings for uſe and ornament, and the country every where abounded with well-built villages, towns, forts, and ſtations.

But, beſides the cultivation of the arts, the Britons had received a more important change by the introduction of Chriſtianity, which, being introduced into Britain in the moſt early age of the church, had made a conſiderable progreſs before the Romans left the iſland; and undoubtedly, as far as it ſpread, had a conſiderable effect in correcting the ferocity of the Britons, and humanizing their manners.

In this period commerce alſo made great progreſs among the Romans and Britons; it was known indeed to the latter, while they were free and unconquered, and had been long carried on by way of barter; but now money was coined not only by the Romans but the Britons, and many coins of both have been found



A Female Pict. A Male Pict.

From Speed.

in England, and are ſtill preſerved in the cabinets of the curious.

CHAP. III.

The Manner in which Britain *became ſubject to the* SAXONS, *and a conciſe View of the moſt material Tranſactions till the Eſtabliſhment of the* HEPTARCHY.

THE Britons now, equally unaccuſtomed to war, and the cares of government, were far from rejoicing in this preſent of liberty, as they were incapable of taking any meaſures to repel the incurſions of the barbarians. Gratian and Conſtantine, who had a little before aſſumed the purple in Britain, had taken with them the flower of the Britiſh youth, and thus deſpoiled the iſland of thoſe who, in this deſperate extremity, would have been its beſt defence. The Picts and Scots, finding that they had nothing more to fear from the Romans, now attacked the northern wall with redoubled vigour; while the Britons, already ſubdued by their fears, finding thoſe ramparts but a weak defence, deſerted their ſtation, and left the country open to the inroads of the enemy. The cruel invaders, ſtimulated by the helpleſs condition and ſubmiſſive behaviour of the inhabitants, carried with them devaſtation and ruin. The unhappy Britons again implored the aſſiſtance of the Romans; but they being preſſed by the arms of Attila, the moſt formidable enemy that had ever over-run the empire, could not comply with their requeſts; on which the Britons,

Britons, being reduced to deſpair, deſerted their habitations, abandoned tillage, and, flying for protection to the woods and mountains, ſuffered equally from hunger and from the enemy. The barbarians themſelves were at length attacked by famine in a country which they had ravaged: and, being harraſſed by the diſperſed Britons, who had not dared to attack them when in a body, retreated, with their ſpoils, into their own country. This induced the Britons to return to their uſual occupations, and, being bleſſed with favourable ſeaſons, they obtained great plenty of all the neceſſaries of life; but made no proviſion for reſiſting the enemy till they were threatened with a new invaſion; when, attending only to the ſuggeſtions of their preſent fears, they followed the advice of Vortigern, prince of Dumnonium, who, though a moſt vicious prince, poſſeſſed the chief authority, and ſent a deputation to prevail on the Saxons to come to their aſſiſtance.

The Saxons had for ſome time been conſidered as the moſt warlike of the German tribes, and had taken poſſeſſion of all the ſea-coaſt from the mouth of the Rhine to Jutland. The diſſolution of the Roman power invited them to renew their inroads, and they with joy heard the deputies of the Britons perſuade them to undertake an enterprize, to which they were before ſufficiently inclined. Hengiſt and Horſa, two princes who were brothers, much celebrated for their valour, eaſily perſuaded their countrymen to embrace an enterprize, that afforded them a favourable opportunity of diſplaying their bravery,

very, and gratifying their avidity. They embarked their troops in three veſſels, and about the year 449, or 450, brought over 1600 men, who landed in the iſle of Thanet, and inſtantly marched to defend the Britons againſt the northern invaders. The Scots and Picts were unable to reſiſt their bravery; and the Britons, applauding their own wiſdom in calling over theſe auxiliaries, flattered themſelves that, under the powerful protection of that warlike people, they ſhould enjoy peace and ſecurity.

But the two Saxon princes perceiving, from their eaſy victory over the Picts and Scots, with what facility they might ſubdue the Britons, who had been unable to reſiſt thoſe feeble invaders, reſolved to fight and conquer for themſelves, and not for the defence of their degenerate allies. They ſent intelligence to Saxony of the fertility and riches of Britain, and repreſented the eaſe with which they might ſubdue a people diſuſed to arms, who, after having been ſo long a province of the Roman empire, were deſtitute of all affection to their new liberty, and of all national attachments and regards. The Saxons in Germany, pleaſed with ſuch an agreeable proſpect, reinforced Hengiſt and Horſa with 5000 men, who came over in ſeventeen veſſels. The Britons now began to form apprehenſions of their allies, whoſe numbers were continually increaſing; but thought of no other remedy but a paſſive ſubmiſſion and connivance. The infatuation of Vortigern is ſaid to have been increaſed by his paſſion for Rowena, the daughter of Hengiſt, with whom he became enamoured

at

at a banquet to which he was invited, and married her, though he had another wife, having purchaſed her conſent, by putting her countrymen in poſſeſſion of the fertile plains of Kent, that were favourably ſituated for their marine expeditions. The Saxons being now ſtrong enough to avow their ambitious deſigns, ſought a quarrel, and complaining that their proviſions were withdrawn, and their ſubſidies ill paid, threw off the maſk, formed an alliance with the Scots and Picts, and proceeded to open hoſtilities with thoſe who had claimed their protection.

The unhappy Britons, filled with indignation againſt their treacherous auxiliaries, were obliged to take arms; and having depoſed Vortigern, put themſelves under the command of Vortimer, his ſon. They fought many battles with various ſucceſs, and in one fought at Egleſford, now Ailsford, Horſa, the Saxon general, was ſlain, by which means Hengiſt obtained the ſole command. This active and cruel general, being continually reinforced by freſh numbers from Germany, carried devaſtation into the remoteſt corners of Britain; and anxious to ſpread the terror of his arms, wherever he marched, ſpared neither age nor ſex; reduced to aſhes the public and private edifices of the Britons; ſlaughtered the Chriſtian prieſts on the altars; and the people, flying to the mountains and deſarts, were intercepted and butchered in heaps: ſome accepted of life and ſervitude under their victors; and others, deſerting their native country, took ſhelter in Armorica, where they ſettled in great numbers, and gave the country the name of Britanny. After

After Vortimer's death, Ambroſius, a Briton deſcended from the Romans, was raiſed to the throne, and endeavoured, not without ſucceſs, to rouze his countrymen from their fatal lethargy, and to unite them againſt the Saxons: but notwithſtanding their moſt vigorous efforts, Hengiſt maintained his ground; and in order to divide the forces and attention of the natives, invited over a new body of Saxons, under the command of his brother Octa, whom he ſettled in Northumberland. He himſelf remained in the ſouth of the iſland, and laid the foundation of the kingdom of Kent, which contained the county of that name, Eſſex, Middleſex, and part of Surry. He fixed his royal ſeat at Canterbury, where he reigned about forty years, and died about the year 488, leaving his dominions to his poſterity.

The avidity of the other northern Germans being excited by the ſucceſs of Hengiſt, induced them to flock over in multitudes, under different leaders, to invade this iſland. Theſe conquerors were chiefly compoſed of three tribes, the Saxons, Angles, and Jutes*, who all paſſed under the common appellation, ſometimes of Saxons, and ſometimes of Angles; and ſpeaking the ſame language, and having the ſame form of government, were naturally led to unite againſt

* The inhabitants of Eſſex, Middleſex, Surry, Suſſex, and all the ſouthern counties as far as Cornwall, were Saxons: Kent and the Iſle of Wight were peopled by Jutes: Mercia, and other parts of the kingdom, were inhabited by Angles.

the ancient inhabitants. The reſiſtance ſtill maintained by the Britons, became daily more feeble; and there were few intervals in their misfortunes, till they were driven to take ſhelter in the mountains of Wales and Cornwall.

The next Saxon kingdom eſtabliſhed in Britain, after that of Kent, was South Saxony or Suſſex. Ælla, a Saxon chief, in 477, landed on the ſouthern coaſt, and took poſſeſſion of the neighbouring country. The Britons took arms, and bravely defended their poſſeſſions; nor were they expelled, till defeated in many battles by their warlike invaders, who being at length reinforced by freſh numbers, Ælla laid ſiege to Andred Ceaſter, which was defended by the garriſon and inhabitants with the greateſt intrepidity, and at laſt took it; when he had the cruelty to put all his enemies, without diſtinction, to the ſword. This barbarity ſecured his conqueſts; he aſſumed the name of king, and extended his dominion over Suſſex, and a great part of Surry. He was ſtopped in his progreſs to the eaſt by the kingdom of Kent; in that to the weſt by another tribe of Saxons, who under the command of Cerdic, and his ſon Kenric, had taken poſſeſſion of that country.

Theſe laſt were called Weſt Saxons, from the ſituation of the country in which they ſettled. They landed in 495, when the Britons were ſo much on their guard, that they gave battle to Cerdic on the very day of his landing; and, though vanquiſhed, continued to oppoſe the invaders. None of the other tribes of Saxons met with ſuch a vigorous reſiſtance. Cerdic

was

was even forced to call for the aſſiſtance of his countrymen from the kindoms of Kent and Suſſex, as well as from Germany, and he was thence joined by a freſh army. Strengthened by theſe ſuccours, he, in 508, fought a deſperate battle with the Britons, commanded by Nazan-Leod, who, in the beginning of the action, routed the wing commanded by Cerdic; but Kenric, who had the advantage with the other wing, came to the aſſiſtance of his father, and the Saxons gained a complete victory, in which Nazan-Leod, with 5000 of his army, periſhed. The Britons, though weakened, were not diſcouraged, and the war continued, tho' the Saxons had commonly the advantage. Cerdic, in order to extend his conqueſts, laid ſiege to Mount Badon or Baneſdown, near Bath, to which the moſt reſolute of the vanquiſhed Britons had retired. In this extremity, the ſouthern Britons applied to Arthur, prince of the Silures, who ſuſtained the declining ſtate of his country by his heroic valour, and by his aſſiſtance the Saxons were defeated in a great battle, and the ſiege raiſed by the Britons in the year 520. But though this ſtopped the progreſs of Cerdic, it did not deprive him of the conqueſts he had already made. He and his ſon Kenric, who ſucceeded him, eſtabliſhed the kingdom of Weſſex, or of the Weſt Saxons, over the counties of Hants, Dorſet, Wilts, Berks, and the Iſle of Wight. Cerdic died in 534, and Kenric in 560.

While the Saxons were making ſuch progreſs in the ſouth, a great number of adventurers,

under ſeveral leaders, landed in 527, on the eaſt coaſt of Britain, and after fighting many battles, eſtabliſhed three kingdoms; Uffa, in 575, aſſumed the title of king of the Eaſt Angles; Crida, in 585, that of Mercia; and Erkenwin, nearly about the ſame time, that of Eaſt Saxony or Eſſex. The kingdom of the Eaſt Angles comprehended the counties of Cambridge, Suffolk and Norfolk: Mercia extended over all the middle counties, from the frontiers of the kingdoms of the Eaſt Angles and Eſſex, to the Severn; and Eaſt Saxony, which was diſmembered from the kingdom of Kent, contained Eſſex, Middleſex, and part of Hertfordſhire.

The Saxons who had been planted in Northumberland, ſoon after the landing of Hengiſt, had met with ſuch an obſtinate reſiſtance, that they made but a ſmall progreſs in ſubduing the inhabitants, till in 547, Ida, a Saxon prince of great valour, brought over a reinforcement, and entirely ſubdued the county now called Northumberland, the biſhopric of Durham, and ſome of the ſouth-eaſt counties of Scotland, and aſſumed the title of king of Bernicia. About the ſame time, another Saxon prince, named Ælla, having conquered Lancaſhire, and the greateſt part of Yorkſhire, received the title of king of Deiri. Theſe two kingdoms were united under Ethelfrid, the grandſon of Ida, who marrying Acia, the daughter of Ælla, expelled her brother Edwin, and eſtabliſhed one of the moſt powerful of the Saxon kingdoms, under the title of Northumberland.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Some general Remarks on the State of BRITAIN *at the Eſtabliſhment of the* HEPTARCHY; *and a conciſe Hiſtory of the Kingdoms of* KENT, SUSSEX, EAST ANGLIA, MERCIA, ESSEX, NORTHUMBERLAND *and* WESSEX.

BY theſe violent conteſts between the natives and their cruel invaders, which laſted near a hundred and fifty years, was the Heptarchy, or the above ſeven Saxon kingdoms, eſtabliſhed; and all that part of the iſland, now called England, except Wales and Cornwall, had changed its inhabitants, language, religion, cuſtoms, and form of government. The Britons, while under the dominion of the Romans, had embraced the Chriſtian religion, and had made ſuch advances towards arts and civil manners, that they had built twenty-eight conſiderable cities, beſides a multitude of villages and country-ſeats. But their fierce Pagan conquerors threw every thing back into the ancient barbarity; and the few Britons, who were not either maſſacred or expelled, were reduced to the moſt abject ſlavery.

While the bloody conteſt was carried on againſt the natives, the Saxon princes, their invaders, preſerved an union of councils and intereſts; but no ſooner were the Britons confined to the barren countries of Wales and Cornwall, than the band of alliance was broken, and diſſentions, wars and revolutions, took place among that turbulent and military people. The

hiſtory of theſe events, recorded by the monks, the intricate and confuſed annaliſts of thoſe ages, we ſhall now place before our readers, by giving a ſuccinct account of the ſucceſſion of kings, and the moſt remarkable revolutions in each particular kingdom.

The Kingdom of KENT.

Hengiſt was ſucceeded in the kingdom of Kent by his ſon Eſcus, who ſeems to have had none of the military genius of his father, whence all the Saxons who fought for fame, or to form new eſtabliſhments, flocked to the ſtandard of Ælla, king of Suſſex, who was carrying on a ſucceſsful war againſt the Britons. Eſcus, after a peaceful reign, left his kingdom, in 512, to his ſon Octa, in whoſe time the Eaſt Saxons diſmembered the provinces of Eſſex and Middleſex from that of Kent, and eſtabliſhed their monarchy. In 534, he was ſucceeded by his ſon Hermenric, who performed nothing worthy of notice, except his aſſociating his ſon Ethelbert with him in the government.

This laſt prince revived the reputation of his family, which had languiſhed through the inactivity of his predeceſſors: but in his firſt efforts to diſtinguiſh himſelf was unſucceſsful, he being twice defeated by Ceaulin, king of Weſſex, and obliged to yield the ſuperiority in the Heptarchy to that ambitious prince, who by reducing the kingdom of Suſſex to ſubjection, had excited the jealouſy of all the other princes. Afterwards, an aſſociation was formed againſt Ceaulin, and Ethelbert being entruſted with the command

command of the united forces, gave him battle, and obtained a deciſive victory. Ethelbert afterwards reduced all the princes, except the king of Northumberland, to a dependance upon him, and even ſeated himſelf by force on the throne of Mercia; but apprehending that a league would be formed againſt him, he prudently placed on that throne, Webba, the rightful heir, though on ſuch conditions as rendered him little better than a tributary prince.

The moſt remarkable event by which the reign of this prince was diſtinguiſhed, was the introduction of Chriſtianity. The religion of the Saxons was of the moſt barbarous kind. Woden, their ſupreme deity, who was deemed the anceſtor of all their princes, was regarded as the god of war, and the chief object of their worſhip, whoſe favour, if they obtained by their valour, would entitle them after death to be admitted into his hall, where they would repoſe on couches, and drink ale out of the ſkulls of their enemies, whom they had ſlain in battle. They alſo worſhipped the ſun and moon; adored Thor, the god of thunder; had images in their temples; offered ſacrifices; believed in ſpells and enchantments, and in a ſet of abſurd doctrines, which they held as ſacred. The animoſity which ſubſiſted between them and the Britons, had rendered them averſe to receiving the Chriſtian faith from them, nor were they fond of communicating to their cruel invaders the doctrine of eternal life and ſalvation.

But now a favourable incident prepared the way for introducing Chriſtianity into Kent.

Ethelbert

Ethelbert had, during the life of his father, eſpouſed Bertha, the daughter of Caribert, king of Paris She was a Chriſtian, and at her marriage it was ſtipulated, that ſhe ſhould enjoy the free exerciſe of her religion. Bertha brought over a French biſhop to the court of Canterbury; was very aſſiduous in her devotional exerciſes; ſupported the credit of her faith by an irreproachable conduct, and employed every art of inſinuation and addreſs to reconcile the king to her religious principles. This reached the ears of pope Gregory the Great, who had himſelf once thought of attempting the converſion of the Britiſh Saxons; and being now deſirous of diſtinguiſhing his pontificate by that great work, he ſent Auguſtine, a Roman monk, with forty aſſociates, to preach the goſpel in this iſland. Theſe miſſionaries, terrified with the dangers that might attend their preaching to ſo fierce a people, whoſe language they did not underſtand, ſtopped in France, while Auguſtine returned to repreſent theſe hazards and difficulties to the pope, and to beg his permiſſion, to deſiſt from the undertaking. But Gregory exhorted them to perſevere, adviſed them to chuſe interpreters from the Franks, who ſtill ſpoke the Saxon tongue, and recommended them to the good offices of queen Brunehaut, who had uſurped the ſovereign power in France; and that princeſs granted them all poſſible aſſiſtance.

Theſe miſſionaries, on their arrival in Kent, in 597, found they were in leſs danger than they had apprehended. Ethelbert aſſigned them

them a habitation in the iſle of Thanet, and ſoon after admitted them to a conference; but, leſt ſpells or enchantments ſhould be employed againſt him, received them in the open air, where he imagined their magic could have no effect. Auguſtine now, by the means of his interpreters, expatiated on the Chriſtian religion, and the everlaſting advantages he would obtain by embracing it. The king anſwered, by excuſing his profeſſing it without a mature examination; but allowed them to reſide at Canterbury, where they ſhould be ſupplied with all neceſſaries, and permitted to deliver their doctrines to his ſubjects.

Encouraged by this favourable reception, Auguſtine with redoubled zeal preached to the Kentiſh Saxons, whoſe attention he attracted by the auſterity of his manners, and being openly favoured by the court, many of the Kentiſh men ſubmitted to baptiſm; and the king himſelf being ſoon after baptized, his example had great influence on his ſubjects. The more to facilitate the reception of Chriſtianity, Gregory ordered Auguſtine to remove the idols from the heathen temples, and as the pagans practiſed ſacrifices, and feaſted with the prieſts on their offerings, he alſo exhorted him to perſuade them, on Chriſtian feſtivals, to kill their cattle in the neighbourhood of the church, and to indulge themſelves in thoſe cheerful entertainments to which they had been accuſtomed. Auguſtine was afterwards conſecrated archbiſhop of Canterbury, and inveſted with authority over all the Britiſh churches.

Ethel-

Ethelbert's embracing Chriſtianity produced a connection of his ſubjects with the French and Italians, that tended to reclaim them from that barbarity in which all the Saxon tribes were involved. Ethelbert alſo, with the conſent of the ſtates of his kingdom, enacted the firſt written laws made by any of the northern conquerors. In ſhort, his reign was glorious to himſelf and beneficial to his people. He reigned fifty years, and dying in 616, was ſucceeded by his ſon Eadbald.

This laſt prince, ſeduced by a paſſion for his mother-in-law, for ſome time deſerted Chriſtianity, on account of its not permitting ſuch inceſtuous marriages, and all his people returned with him to idolatry. However, Laurentius, the ſucceſſor of Auguſtine, convinced him of his error, on which, divorcing his mother-in-law, he returned to the profeſſion of the Chriſtian religion, and his whole people returned with him. He died in 640, after a reign of twenty-five years, leaving two ſons, Erminfrid and Ercombert.

Ercombert, though the youngeſt ſon, aſcended the throne, and utterly extirpated idolatry. He reigned twenty-four years, and was ſucceeded by his ſon Egbert.

Egbert, though diſtinguiſhed by his encouragement of learning, put to death his two couſin-germans, the ſons of Erminfrid, his uncle; but this bloody precaution could not, after his death, fix the crown on the head of his ſon Edric. Lothaire, brother to the deceaſed prince, took poſſeſſion of the kingdom, and, to

ſecure

ſecure the ſovereignty in his family, aſſociated with him in the adminiſtration of the government, Richard his ſon. Edric, the diſpoſſeſſed prince, applied for aſſiſtance to Edilwach, king of Suſſex, who ſupporting him, a battle was fought, in which Lothaire was defeated and ſlain, and Richard flying, died at Lucca in Italy. Edric died in 686.

Upon the death of Edric, Widrid, his brother, obtained the poſſeſſion of the crown: but faction now beginning to prevail among the nobility, encouraged Cedwalla, king of Weſſex, and his brother Mollo, to invade the kingdom. They committed great devaſtations in Kent; but the death of Mollo, who fell in a ſkirmiſh, gave a ſhort breathing time to the kingdom. Widrid reſtored the affairs of Kent, and, after a reign of thirty-two years, left the crown to his poſterity. Eadbert, Ethelbert, and Alric, his deſcendants, ſucceſſively aſcended the throne; but after the death of the laſt in 794, the royal family was extinguiſhed, and every factious leader, who hoped to obtain the crown, threw the kingdom into confuſion, till at laſt Baldred, an illegitimate branch of the royal family, was, in 723, expelled by Egbert, king of Weſſex, who diſſolved the heptarchy, and brought the ſeveral kingdoms under his dominion.

The Kingdom of SUSSEX.

This was the ſmalleſt kingdom of the heptarchy, and its hiſtory is the moſt imperfect. Ælla, the founder of the monarchy, left the crown to his ſon Ciſſa, who was moſt remarkable for his

his long reign of ſeventy-ſix years, and his building of Chicheſter. During his time the South Saxons fell into an almoſt total dependance on the kingdom of Weſſex; and ſcarce do we know the names of the princes poſſeſſed of the titular dignity. The laſt of them, named Adelwalch, was defeated and ſlain in battle by Ceadwalla, king of Weſſex, and leaving two infant ſons, the conqueror had the cruelty to cauſe them to be murdered. Berćthun and Audhun, two noblemen, for ſome time reſiſted the violence committed by the Weſt Saxons; but this only ſerved to prolong the miſeries of their country; and their conqueſt of this kingdom was the firſt ſtep taken by the Weſt Saxons, towards obtaining the ſole monarchy of England.

The Kingdom of EAST-ANGLIA.

The hiſtory of Eaſt-Anglia contains little worthy of notice. Earpwold, the fourth king, and great grandſon of Uffa, the founder of that kingdom, was obliged by Edwin, king of Northumberland, on whom he entirely depended, to embrace the Chriſtian religion: yet was afterwards perſuaded by his wife to relapſe into idolatry; but was ſoon after aſſaſſinated by one Richbert, a pagan, who, without aſſuming the title of king, exerciſed the ſupreme authority for three years, when Sigebert, the half brother of Earpwold, was raiſed to the throne. This prince reſtored Chriſtianity, introduced learning among the Eaſt Angles, and is ſaid to have founded the univerſity of Cambridge. He at length retired into a monaſtery, leaving his crown

crown to his kinſman Egric, who had not long been ſeated on the throne, when, his dominions being attacked by Penda king of Mercia, his ſubjects having little confidence in his capacity, entreated Sigebert to quit his retirement, and take the command of the forces, he conſented, and accompanied Egric into the field, where they were defeated and ſlain. The crown now devolved to Annas, who reſtored Ceanwalch to the throne of Weſſex, of which he had been deprived by Penda, who was ſo exaſperated on this occaſion, that he reſolved to ravage Eaſt-Anglia with fire and ſword. Annas took meaſures for his defence, but died in the midſt of his preparations; and was ſucceeded by his brother Ethelric, who purchaſed a peace with a conſiderable ſum, and even joined with Penda in the invaſion of Northumberland, where they were vanquiſhed and ſlain. Several other princes ſucceeded to the throne, the particulars of whoſe reigns are unknown. The laſt of theſe was Ethelbert, who was treacherouſly murdered by Offa, king of Mercia, in 792, and his kingdom united to that of Mercia.

The Kingdom of MERCIA.

Mercia was the moſt conſiderable kingdom of the heptarchy, as it extended in length from the Thames to the Humber, and in breadth from the kingdoms of Eſſex and Eaſt-Anglia to the Severn, and bordering on all the other ſix kingdoms, it from that circumſtance obtained its name. Wibba, the ſon of Crida, who founded the monarchy, being ſeated on the

throne by Ethelbert king of Kent, enjoyed but a precarious authority; and, after his deceaſe, Ceorl, his kinſman, was, by the influence of the ſame prince, preferred to his ſon Penda, whoſe turbulent diſpoſition raiſed that prince's apprehenſions. After Ceorl's death, Penda aſcended the throne, and, tho' he was then fifty years of age, his martial diſpoſition was not abated; for he was continually at war with the neighbouring ſtates, and rendered himſelf equally odious to his own ſubjects, and to ſtrangers, by his violence and injuſtice. Sigebert, Egric, and Annas, three kings of Eaſt-Anglia, periſhed in battle againſt him; as did alſo Edwin and Oſwald, kings of Northumberland: but at laſt he was defeated and ſlain by Oſwy, the ſon of Oſwald. Peada, his ſon, ſucceeded to the crown of Mercia in 655, and married the daughter of Oſwy, who, being educated in the Chriſtian religion, ſucceſsfully employed her influence in bringing her huſband and his ſubjects to embrace that religion. Peada dying by poiſon, his ſon Wolfhere aſcended the throne, and, after having reduced to dependence the kingdoms of Eaſt-Anglia and Eſſex, left the crown to his brother Ethelred, who, notwithſtanding his being a lover of peace, made a ſucceſsful expedition into Kent, repulſed Egfrid, king of Northumberland, who had invaded his dominions; and ſlew in battle Elfwin, that prince's brother: but being deſirous of compoſing all animoſities, he paid Egfrid a ſum of money, as a compenſation for the loſs of his brother; and, after a proſperous reign of thirty years,

years, reſigned the throne to Kendred, the ſon of Wolfhere, and retired into a monaſtery. Kendred, however, returned the preſent to Ceolrod, the ſon of Ethelred, and, going on a pilgrimage to Rome, paſſed his life there in penances and devotion. Ceolred was ſucceeded by Ethelbald, his brother's ſon, and that prince being ſlain in a mutiny, was ſucceeded by Offa.

Offa, who obtained the crown in 755, defeated Lothaire, king of Kent, in a bloody battle at Otford upon the Darent, and reduced his kingdom to a ſtate of dependence: he alſo defeated Kenwulph, king of Weſſex, at Beſſington in Oxfordſhire; and conquering that county, together with that of Gloceſter, annexed both to his other dominions. But the glory he acquired by war, was ſtained by his treacherous murder of Ethelbert, king of Eaſt-Anglia, and his ſeizing of that kingdom. This young prince, who is ſaid to have poſſeſſed great merit, had paid his addreſſes to Elfreda, Offa's daughter, and was invited to Hereford, with all his retinue, to ſolemnize the nuptials; where, amidſt a ſcene of joy and feſtivity, he was ſeized by Offa, and ſecretly beheaded; and though Elfrida, who was ſhocked at her father's treachery, had time to give warning to the Eaſt-Anglian nobility, who eſcaped into their own country, Offa, having extinguiſhed the royal family, ſucceeded in his deſign of ſubduing that kingdom. The perfidious prince, to atone for this crime, practiſed all the monkiſh devotions ſo much eſteemed in that ignorant and ſuperſtitious age; gave the tenth of his goods to the

church, beſtowed rich donations on Hereford cathedral, made a pilgrimage to Rome, where he procured the papal abſolution, and engaged to pay the pope a yearly donation for the ſupport of an Engliſh college at Rome, and to raiſe the ſum impoſed a tax of a penny on each houſe poſſeſſed of thirty pence a year. This impoſition, being afterwards levied on all England, was commonly called Peter's pence, and, tho' at firſt a gift, was afterwards claimed by the Roman pontiff as a tribute. Offa alſo, pretending to be directed by a viſion from heaven, diſcovered at Verulam the relics of St. Alban the martyr, and built a magnificent monaſtery there. Offa died in 794, after a reign of thirty-nine years.

Offa was ſucceeded by his ſon Egfrith, who ſurvived his father only five months; when Kenulph, a deſcendant of the royal family, obtained the crown. This prince went to war with Egbert, king of Kent, and, taking him priſoner, put out his eyes, and cut off his hands; leaving Cathred, his own brother, in poſſeſſion of that kingdom. Kenulph was ſlain in an inſurrection of the Eaſt-Anglians, whoſe crown had been uſurped by Offa, his predeceſſor. He left Kenelm, his ſon, a minor, who was murdered the ſame year by Quenrade, his ſiſter, who hoped to have aſſumed the government, but was ſupplanted by Ceolulf her uncle, who was two years after dethroned by Beornulf, king of the Eaſt-Angles. The reign of this uſurper was ſhort and unfortunate; for he was defeated by the Weſt-Saxons, and killed by

his

his own ſubjects. Ludican, his ſucceſſor, ſuffered the ſame fate; and Wiglaff, who aſcended this unſettled throne, and found every thing in the utmoſt confuſion, was conquered by Egbert, who united all the Saxon kingdoms into one monarchy.

The Kingdom of ESSEX.

The hiſtory of this kingdom is extremely imperfect. It was founded by Erkenwin, who reigned ſixty years, but the tranſactions of that time are not recorded. He was ſucceeded by his ſon Sleda, after whoſe death his ſon Sebert obtained the crown, who being nephew to Ethelbert king of Kent, that prince prevailed on him to embrace the Chriſtian religion. After his death the crown became the joint property of his ſons Sexted and Seward, who relapſed into idolatry, and were ſoon after ſlain in a battle againſt the Weſt-Saxons. After them reigned ſucceſſively Sigebert the Little, Sigebert the Good, who reſtored Chriſtianity, Swithelm, Sigheri, and Offa. This laſt prince, notwithſtanding his marriage with Keneſwitha, a Mercian princeſs, the daughter of Penda, made a vow of chaſtity, and, going in pilgrimage to Rome, ſpent the reſt of his life in a cloyſter. He was ſuceeeded by Selred, who reigned thirty-eight years, and was the laſt of the royal line; the failure of which threw the kingdom into great confuſion, and reduced it to a dependence on Mercia. Switherd, by the conſent of the Mercian princes, firſt aſcended the throne; and at his death he was ſucceeded

by Sigeric, who died in a pilgrimage to Rome. Sigeric, his ſucceſſor, being unable to defend his kingdom, ſubmitted to the victorious arms of Egbert.

The Kingdom of NORTHUMBERLAND.

This kingdom extended acroſs England, from the German ocean to the Iriſh ſea, and from the Humber far into Lothian in Scotland. It was at firſt divided into two kingdoms, that to the ſouth called Deïri, and that to the north Bernicia. But Adelfrid, king of Bernicia, marrying Acca, the daughter of Ælla, king of Deïri, and expelling Edwin, her infant brother, united all the countries north of the Humber under one monarchy, and ſpread the terror of the Saxon arms by his victories over the Scots, Picts and Welch. On his beſieging Cheſter, the Britons marched out to engage him, attended by 1250 monks from the monaſtery of Bangor, who ſtood at a ſmall diſtance from the field of battle. Adelfrid enquiring the reaſon of that unuſual appearance, was told, thoſe prieſts had come to pray againſt him: "Then, "ſaid he, they are as much our enemies as "thoſe who intend to fight againſt us:" and immediately ſent a detachment againſt them, which fell upon them with ſuch fury, that only fifty eſcaped with their lives. The Britons, aſtoniſhed at this event, received a total defeat. Cheſter was obliged to ſurrender; and Adelfrid, purſuing his victory, took Bangor, and entirely demoliſhed the monaſtery; which was ſo extenſive, that there was the diſtance of a mile

mile from one gate to another, and it contained 2100 monks, who are ſaid to have maintained themſelves by their labour.

Young Edwin, whom Adelfrid had deprived of the crown of Deïri, was now grown to man's eſtate, and wandered from place to place in continual danger, from the attempts of Adelfrid, and at laſt received protection in the court of Redwald, king of the Eaſt-Angles, where his gallant and engaging deportment procured him great eſteem and affection. Redwald was however earneſtly ſolicited by the king of Northumberland to kill or deliver up his gueſt, and promiſed rich preſents in caſe he would comply, and threatened him with war on his refuſal. After rejecting ſeveral meſſages of this kind, he began to yield to the motives of intereſt, and retained the laſt ambaſſador till he ſhould come to a determination. Edwin, though informed of the king's irreſolution, was reſolved to remain in Eaſt-Anglia, placing his confidence in Redwald; thinking it better to die than to prolong a life ſo much expoſed to the perſecution of his powerful rival. His thus relying on Redwald's honour and friendſhip, with his other accompliſhments, engaged the queen on his ſide, who ſo effectually repreſented to her huſband the infamy of delivering up their royal gueſt, who had fled to them for protection, to certain deſtruction, that Redwald conceived more generous ſentiments, and reſolved to prevent Adelfrid, by an unexpected attack. He therefore ſuddenly marched into the kingdom of Northumberland, and in engaging in battle with

with Adelfrid, that monarch was defeated and ſlain, and his three ſons, who were yet infants, were carried into Scotland, and Edwin placed on the throne of Northumberland.

Edwin began his reign by civilizing his ſubjects, and by the ſtrict adminiſtration of juſtice, in which he had ſuch ſucceſs, that it was ſaid, that during his reign a woman or a child might openly carry every where a purſe of gold, without any danger of violence or robbery. He was the greateſt prince in the Heptarchy during that age. Hiſtory gives a remarkable inſtance of the affection of one of his ſervants. Cuichelme, king of Weſſex, was his enemy, but fearing to make war on ſo brave and powerful a prince, employed an aſſaſſin, who having obtained admiſſion, by pretending that he had a meſſage to deliver from Cuichelme, drew his dagger, and ruſhed upon the king; when Lilla, an officer of the army, having no other means of defence, ruſhed between the king and the dagger, which was ſtruck with ſuch violence that it pierced through Lilla's body, and wounded Edwin: but before the aſſaſſin could repeat the blow, he was killed by the king's attendants.

The Eaſt-Angles having conſpired againſt Redwald, ſlew him, and then offered the crown to Edwin, of whoſe valour and experience he had given them proofs, while he reſided among them; but Edwin, from a ſenſe of gratitude, obliged them to chuſe Earpwold, the ſon of Redwald, his benefactor.

After

After Edwin's acceſſion to the throne, he married Ethelburga, the daughter of Ethelbert, king of Kent, who emulating the glory of her mother, who had been the means of converting her huſband and his people to Chriſtianity, ſtipulated that ſhe ſhould have the free exerciſe of her religion, which was readily granted, and brought with her Paullinus, a learned biſhop. After her marriage ſhe uſed many arguments to perſuade the king to embrace Chriſtianity. Edwin declared his readineſs to yield to conviction; but like a prudent prince, reſolved firſt to examine the foundations of its doctrines: he accordingly held ſeveral conferences with Paullinus, canvaſſed the arguments propoſed to him with the wiſeſt of his counſellors, and after a long and ſerious enquiry, declared in favour of the Chriſtian religion. The people ſoon after imitated his example; for beſides the king's authority and influence, they were moved by another ſtriking example; for the high-prieſt being converted by a public conference with Paullinus, led the way in deſtroying the images he had ſo long worſhipped. At length Edwin periſhed, with his ſon Oſfrid, in a great battle fought againſt Cadwalla, king of the Britons, and Penda, king of Mercia, in the forty-eighth year of his age, and the ſeventeenth of his reign. On which the kingdom of Northumberland was again divided; for Eanfrid, the ſon of Adelfrid, returned with his brothers Oſwald and Oſwy from Scotland, and took poſſeſſion of Bernicia, his paternal kingdom; while Oſric, couſin-german to Edwin, eſtabliſhed

eſtabliſhed himſelf in Deïri. As to Edwin's ſurviving ſons, Eanfrid, the eldeſt, fled to Penda, by whom he was treacherouſly murdered. Vuſcfræa, with Yffi, the grandſon of Edwin, by Osfrid, ſought protection in Kent, and not finding themſelves in ſafety there, fled to France, where they died.

Eanfrid, king of Bernicia, and Oſric, king of Deïri, returned to Paganiſm, and the people ſeem to have followed their example: ſince Paullinus, who had converted them, thought proper to retire with Ethelburga, the queen dowager, into Kent. Both theſe kings periſhed ſoon after; Oſric, in a battle againſt Cadwalla, the Briton; and Eanfrid, by that prince's treachery. But Oſwald, the brother of Eanfrid, in 634, again united the kingdom of Northumberland, and reſtored the Chriſtian religion. He gained a bloody battle againſt Cadwalla, which was the laſt vigorous effort made by the Britons againſt the Saxons. Oſwald was greatly beloved for his wiſdom, piety and charity; but was ſlain in a battle fought againſt Penda, king of Mercia.

Oſwald was ſucceeded by his brother Oſwy, who eſtabliſhed himſelf in the kingdom of Northumberland by the murder of Oſwin, the ſon of Oſric, the laſt king of the race of Deïri. His ſon Egfrid ſucceeded him, who periſhed in battle againſt the Picts, without leaving any children, becauſe Adelthrid, his wife, refuſed to violate her vow of chaſtity; Alfred, his baſtard brother, then obtained poſſeſſion of the crown, which he enjoyed nineteen years, and left

left it to Oſred, his ſon, a boy of eight years of age. This prince, after a reign of eleven years, was murdered by Kenred, his kinſman, who, after reigning only one year, periſhed by a like fate. Oſric, and after him Celwulph, the ſon of Kenred, then obtained the crown, which the latter, in 738, reſigned to Eadbert, his couſin-german; who, imitating his predeceſſor, quitted the throne, and retired into a monaſtery. Oſwolf, the ſon of Edbert, after reigning only one year, was ſlain in a ſedition; and Mollo, who was not of the royal family, mounted the throne. He periſhed by the treachery of Ailred, a prince of the blood, who obtained the crown; but was ſoon after expelled by his ſubjects. Ethelred, the ſon of Mollo, who ſucceeded him, underwent a like fate. Ceowald, the next king, the brother of Ailred, was depoſed and ſlain by the people, and his throne filled by Oſred, his nephew; who, after a reign of one year, made way for Ethelbert, another ſon of Mollo, whoſe death was no leſs tragical than that of moſt of his predeceſſors. After his death an univerſal anarchy prevailed in Northumberland; ſeveral others aſcended the throne, and were almoſt inſtantly murdered, as different parties prevailed, till an end was put to this confuſion, by the kingdom being conquered by Egbert, king of Weſſex.

The Kingdom of WESSEX.

The Britons being inured to arms at the eſtabliſhment of this kingdom, Cerdic, the founder of the monarchy, and his ſon Kenric, fought many battles, with various ſucceſs, againſt the natives; by which means the martial ſpirit of this tribe of Saxons was carried to the greateſt height. Ceaulin, the ſon and ſucceſſor of Kenric, who began his reign in 560, by waging a continual war againſt the Britons, added a great part of Devonſhire and Somerſetſhire to his other dominions. Elated by this ſucceſs, he then invaded the neighbouring Saxon ſtates, and becoming terrible to all, excited a general confederacy againſt him; a confederacy, which, under the conduct of Ethelbert, king of Kent, proved ſucceſsful; when having, by the violence of his temper, loſt the affections of his people, he was expelled the kingdom. His ſons Cuichelme and Cuthwin jointly governed the kingdom till the expulſion of the latter in 591; and the death of the former, in 593, made way for Cealric, to whom ſucceeded Ceobald; by whoſe death, in 611, Kynegrils obtained the crown. This prince embraced the Chriſtian religion, through the perſuaſion of Oſwald, king of Northumberland, who had married his daughter. Kenwalch next ſucceeded to the crown, and dying in 672, Sexburga, his widow, who was a woman of ſpirit, kept poſſeſſion of the government, though the ſucceſſion was diſputed, till her death, which happened two years after.

Eſewin

Eſewin then peaceably aſcended the throne, and, after a reign of two years, made way for Kentwin, who reigned nine years, and was ſucceeded by Ceodwalla.

This prince did not mount the throne without oppoſition. Being enterprizing, warlike and ſucceſsful, he entirely ſubdued the kingdom of Suſſex, and annexed it to his own dominions. He alſo made inroads into Kent, but was oppoſed by king Widred, who ſlew his brother Mollo in a ſkirmiſh. Ceodwalla, at laſt, tired with war and bloodſhed, beſtowed ſeveral endowments on the church, and made a pilgrimage to Rome, where he received baptiſm, and died in 698. Ina, his ſucceſſor, inherited his military virtues, to which he added the more valuable ones of juſtice, prudence and policy. He made war on the Britons in Somerſetſhire, and having, at length, ſubdued it, treated the vanquiſhed with an humanity hitherto unknown to the Saxon conquerors: for he allowed the proprietors to retain the poſſeſſion of their lands, encouraged marriages and alliances between them and his ancient ſubjects, and granted them the privilege of being governed by the ſame laws. Theſe laws he augmented and aſcertained; and though he was diſturbed by ſome inſurrections at home, his long reign of thirty-ſeven years was one of the moſt glorious in the Heptarchy. In the decline of life, he made a pilgrimage to Rome, and at his return, ſhut himſelf up in a cloyſter, where he died.

As he had no children of his own, by the perſuaſion of Ethelburga, his queen, he left by will the crown to Adelard, her brother: but this did not take place without ſome difficulty; for Oſwald, a prince more nearly allied to the crown, took arms againſt Adelard, tho' without ſucceſs; but dying ſoon after, Adelard's title was no farther diſputed; and, in 741, he was ſucceeded by Cudred, whoſe reign was diſtinguiſhed by a great victory which Edelhun, his general, obtained over Ethelbald, king of Mercia. His death made way for Sigebert, his kinſman, who governed ſo ill, that he was dethroned, and Cenulph crowned in his ſtead. The exiled prince found refuge with duke Cumbran, governor of Hampſhire, who added new obligations to Sigebert, by giving him many ſalutary counſels for his future conduct, accompanied with ſome reprehenſions for the paſt. But theſe were ſo much reſented by the ungrateful monſter, that he treacherouſly murdered his benefactor. After this infamous action, he was forſaken by every one, and ſkulking about in the foreſts, was at laſt diſcovered by one who had been Cumbran's ſervant, who inſtantly revenged the murder of his maſter.

Cenulph, who had aſcended the throne on Sigebert's expulſion, was ſucceſsful in many battles with the Britons in Cornwall; but afterwards loſt much of his reputation by his ill ſucceſs againſt Offa, king of Mercia. Kynehard, brother to the depoſed Sigebert, though expelled the kingdom, alſo hovered on the frontiers,

tiers, watching an opportunity to attack his rival. The king having an intrigue with a young woman, who lived at Merton, in Surry, whither he frequently retired, he was in 784 ſuddenly ſurrounded in the night, by Kynehard and his followers, and after making a brave reſiſtance, was murdered, with all his attendants. But the next day, the nobility and people of the neighbourhood riſing in arms, took revenge on Kynehard for this ſlaughter, by putting every one to the ſword who had been engaged in that cruel enterprize.

Brithric, though remotely deſcended from the royal family, next obtained the crown; but did not wear it without inquietude. Egbert, a young man of the moſt promiſing hopes, was deſcended in a direct line from king Ina, and filled him with jealouſy; both on account of his ſeeming by his birth better intitled to the crown, and his having acquired the affections of the people. Egbert, ſenſible of the dangers to which he was expoſed by the ſuſpicions of Brithric, ſecretly withdrew to France, where, by living in the court of Charlemagne, and ſerving in that prince's armies, he acquired thoſe accompliſhments which afterwards enabled him to make ſuch a ſhining figure on the throne; and it was not long before he obtained opportunities of diſplaying his natural and acquired talents.

Brithric had married Eadburga, the natural daughter of Offa, king of Mercia, who was equally infamous for her cruelty and incontinence, and, having great influence over her

huſband, often inſtigated him to deſtroy thoſe of the nobility whom ſhe hated, and when ſhe failed of ſucceſs, made no ſcruple of being active in the moſt treacherous attempts. She had mixed a cup of poiſon for a young nobleman, who had obtained the friendſhip of her huſband, and was therefore the object of her jealouſy; but unfortunately for her, the king drank of the fatal cup as well as the nobleman, and ſoon after expired. This, and her other crimes, rendered her ſo odious, that ſhe was obliged to fly into France; whence Egbert was at the ſame time recalled by the nobility, and thus aſcended the throne of his anceſtors in 799.

As no exact rule of ſucceſſion was obſerved in the heptarchy, the reigning prince was continually agitated with jealouſy againſt the princes of the blood, whoſe death alone could ſecure his poſſeſſion of the throne; this, with the number of conſpiracies and murders of the kings themſelves, the admiration of the monaſtic life, with the ſuppoſed merit of continence even in the marriage ſtate, had entirely extinguiſhed the royal families in all the kingdoms, except that of Weſſex. But though Egbert was the ſole deſcendant of the firſt Saxon conquerors that ſubdued Britain, he for ſome time gave no diſturbance to the neighbouring ſtates; and rather choſe to turn his arms againſt the Britons in Cornwall, whom he defeated in ſeveral battles; till at length Bernulf, king of Mercia, invading his dominions, recalled him from the conqueſt of that country.

The Mercians had, before Egbert's acceſſion, conquered Eaſt-Anglia, and eſtabliſhed tributary princes in the kingdoms of Kent and Eſſex. Northumberland was in a ſtate of anarchy, and no ſtate of any conſequence remained, to prevent their reducing the heptarchy into a ſingle kingdom, except that of Weſſex, which, being much inferior in extent to that of Mercia, was ſolely ſupported by the great qualities of Egbert. That prince marched againſt the invaders, and giving them battle at Ellandun in Wiltſhire, obtained a complete victory, and, by the great ſlaughter he made of them in their flight, gave a mortal blow to the power of the Mercians. While, in the proſecution of this victory, he himſelf entered their country on the ſide of Oxfordſhire, and threatened the heart of their dominions, he ſent Ethelwolf, his eldeſt ſon, with an army into Kent, who expelling Baldred, the tributary king, Egbert ſoon became maſter of the country. With equal facility was the kingdom of Eſſex conquered; and the Eaſt-Angles, from their averſion to the Mercian government, to which they had been obliged to ſubmit by treachery and violence, immediately roſe in arms, and beſought Egbert's protection. Bernulf, king of Mercia, marched againſt them; but was defeated and ſlain, and Ludican, his ſucceſſor, met with the ſame fate. The enterprizes of Egbert being facilitated by theſe inſurrections, he marched into the center of Mercia, and made an eaſy conqueſt of a diſpirited and divided people, whom he the more eaſily engaged to ſubmiſſion,

by allowing Wiglef, their countryman, to retain the title of king, while he himſelf exerciſed the ſovereign power. The anarchy in which Northumberland was involved, tempted him to march thither; when the inhabitants being unable to oppoſe him, and being deſirous of having ſome eſtabliſhed form of government, on his firſt appearance ſent deputies, who ſubmitted to his authority, and ſwore allegiance to him. Egbert, however, allowed Northumberland, as he had done Eaſt-Anglia and Mercia, the power of electing a king, who was dependant upon him, and paid him tribute.

Thus, in the year 827, all the kingdoms of the heptarchy became united in one great monarchy, near four hundred years after the firſt arrival of the Saxons in Britain; and the ambition, the bravery, and ſkill of Egbert, at laſt accompliſhed, what ſo many princes had in vain attempted. The three kingdoms of Kent, Northumberland, and Mercia, which had ſucceſſively aſpired to general dominion, were now incorporated into his empire, and the other ſmaller kingdoms ſeemed willingly to ſhare the ſame fate. His territories were nearly of the ſame extent as what is now properly termed England; and the Anglo-Saxons had the pleaſing proſpect of forming a great and civilized kingdom, poſſeſſed of internal tranquillity, and ſecured againſt the invaſions of foreign enemies.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

The Saxons, who ſubdued Britain, had enjoyed great liberty in their own country, and brought

brought with them the ſame principles of independence which they had inherited from their anceſtors. The chieftains, who commanded theſe military expeditions, poſſeſſed a very limited authority; and, as they exterminated rather than ſubdued the ancient inhabitants, on their being tranſplanted into a new country, they preſerved all their civil and military inſtitutions; but were not very ſtrict in maintaining a regular ſucceſſion of their princes; for if any king left a ſon of an age and capacity fit for government, the young prince naturally aſcended the throne; but if he was a minor, his uncle, or next prince of the blood, obtained the crown, and left it to his poſterity. Hence aroſe the many confuſions in the ſucceſſion of princes, and the numerous murders that ſtained the heptarchy with royal blood, and at laſt contributed to its diſſolution.

Though the Saxons had been ſo long ſettled in Britain, they do not ſeem to have been much improved, either in arts, civility, or humanity. Even their Chriſtianity itſelf, had not ſoftened their manners. As they received it from Rome, they received with it a mixture of credulity and ſuperſtition that deſtroyed all its effects. The reverence paid to ſaints and angels, ſupplanted the adoration of God. Monaſtic obſervances were eſteemed more meritorious than the moral virtues. Remorſe of conſcience, for injuſtice, cruelty and murder, was appeaſed, not by repentance and amendment of life, but by penances and offerings to the church. Even the military virtues began to

to be neglected; and the nobility preferring the ſecurity and ſloth of a cloyſter to the tumults and glory of war, chiefly valued themſelves on endowing monaſteries, of which they aſſumed the government.

The Britons who never acknowledged any ſubordination to the Roman pontiff, had conducted all their eccleſiaſtical affairs by domeſtic ſynods and councils: but the Saxons receiving their religion from Roman monks, were taught a profound reverence for that ſee, and pilgrimages to Rome were repreſented as the moſt meritorious acts of devotion. Not only noblemen and ladies of high rank undertook this tedious journey; but kings themſelves, abdicating their crowns, flew to the pope to obtain a ſecure paſſport to heaven. And every prince was extolled by themſelves, who were then the only hiſtorians, not in proportion to his civil and military virtues, but to his devoted attachment towards their order, and his ſuperſtitious reverence for Rome.

CHAP. V.

Of the Kings of England from the HEPTARCHY, *to the Invaſion of the* NORMANS.

EGBERT.

THE kingdoms of the Heptarchy thus united under Egbert, the firſt king of England, had not the leaſt deſire of revolting from their conqueror, and his great kingdom ſeemed to be at once firmly eſtabliſhed. Dazzled

EGBERT.
W. Walker sculp.

zled by the ſplendor of his victories, and the vigour of his adminiſtration, they repoſed themſelves on his valour and wiſdom, and while an union in government afforded them the agreeable proſpect of domeſtic tranquility, they had reaſon to flatter themſelves, that they ſhould become formidable to their neighbours, and be above the fear of foreign invaſions; but probable as theſe views appeared, they were ſoon found to be vain and unſubſtantial, by the appearance of the Danes. In 832, five years after Edgar had eſtabliſhed the monarchy of England, the Danes landed in the iſle of Shepey, pillaged it, and eſcaped with impunity. The next year they came in thirty-five ſhips, and landing, were attacked by Egbert, at Charmouth, in Dorſetſhire; and after a bloody battle, in which a great number of the Danes were ſlain, made good their retreat to their ſhips. Finding that they muſt expect a vigorous reſiſtance from their warlike prince, they now entered into an alliance with the Britons of Cornwall; and, two years after, landing in that country, marched with their confederates into Devonſhire: but at Hengeſdown were met by Egbert, and totally defeated. While England continued in this ſtate of inquietude, Egbert, who alone was able to put a ſtop to this new evil, unfortunately died in 838, and was ſucceeded by his ſon Ethelwolf.

ETHELWOLF.

This prince was better qualified for governing a convent than a kingdom; for he had neither

ther the abilities, nor the vigour of his father. He began his reign by giving to Athelſton, his eldeſt ſon, the conquered provinces of Eſſex, Kent and Suſſex: but no inconveniences ſeem to have ariſen from this partition, all domeſtic diſſentions being prevented by the continual terror of the Daniſh invaſions. In the very firſt year of his reign, a fleet of theſe ravagers, conſiſting of thirty ſail, arrived at Southampton; but had ſcarce begun to lay waſte the country, when they were repulſed with loſs by by Wolfhere, governor of the neighbouring country; and the ſame year another band landing at Portſmouth, were defeated by Æthelhelm, governor of Dorſetſhire, who bought his victory by the loſs of his life. The next year the Danes made ſeveral inroads into England, in Eaſt-Anglia, Lindſey, and Kent, and avoiding coming to a general engagement, which was not ſuitable to their plan, had ſeveral ſkirmiſhes, and though they were ſometimes repulſed, obtained their end of ravaging the country, and carrying off the booty. They had ſmall veſſels, which eaſily ran up the creeks and rivers, where they drew them aſhore, and forming an intrenchment around them, guarded them with a part of their number, while the remainder diſperſed themſelves over the neighbouring country, and ſeizing the inhabitants with their cattle and goods, haſted to their ſhips, and ſoon diſappeared. There was not time for troops to march from diſtant places, and if the military forces of the county were aſſembled, they either repulſed them and continued

tinued their ravages, or betaking themſelves to their veſſels, and ſetting ſail, ſuddenly invaded ſome diſtant part, not prepared for their reception. Thus every part of England was kept in a continual alarm; and the inhabitants of one county did not dare to march to the aſſiſtance of another, leſt their own families and properties ſhould, by their abſence, be expoſed to the fury of theſe barbarous invaders. All orders of men ſuffered by them; but the prieſts and monks, who were commonly ſpared in the quarrels of the Heptarchy, were the chief objects on which the Daniſh idolaters exerciſed their rage and animoſity. Every ſeaſon of the year was dangerous, and the abſence of the enemy could not ſecure the people a moment's ſafety.

Theſe invaſions had now become almoſt annual, when in 851 they landed in England in ſuch numbers, as ſeemed to threaten it with univerſal ſubjection. Ceorle, governor of Devonſhire, defeated one body of the Danes, with great ſlaughter, at Wenebury; and king Athelſtan attacking another at ſea, ſunk nine of their ſhips, and put the reſt to flight. However, a body of them ventured for the firſt time to take up their winter quarters in the iſle of Thanet, and receiving in the ſpring a ſtrong reinforcement in 350 veſſels, advanced from thence, and plundered and burnt London and Canterbury, penetrated into Mercia, where they put to flight Brichtric, who attempted to oppoſe them, and marched into Surry, laying waſte all the country round them. Ethelwolf now marched againſt them at the head of the

Weſt Saxons, and after a bloody battle, defeated them at Okely. Yet they ſtill maintained their ſettlement in the iſle of Thanet, where they were attacked, in 853 by Eather and Huda, governors of Kent and Surry, when, though worſted in the beginning of the action, they repulſed the aſſailants, and killed both the governors. They then removed to the iſle of Shepey, whence they took up their winter quarters.

The diſtreſs and danger in which England was now involved, did not prevent Ethelwolf's making a pilgrimage to Rome, with his fourth ſon Alfred, then but ſix years old. He there ſpent twelve months in exerciſes of devotion; and beſides making preſents to the moſt diſtinguiſhed eccleſiaſtics, gave a perpetual grant of 300 mancuſes * a year, one third to the people, another to ſupport the lamps of St. Peter's church, and another thoſe of St. Paul's. In his return he married Judith, the daughter of the emperor Charles the Bald; but on his arriving in England, met with an oppoſition which he little expected.

Athelſton, his eldeſt ſon, being dead; Ethelbald, his ſecond, who had aſſumed the government, reſolved, in conjunction with many of the nobles, to exclude his father from the throne, which his weakneſs and ſuperſtition rendered him unfit to fill. A bloody war, added to all the other calamities in which Eng-

* A mancus was about the weight of our preſent half crown. *Spelman's Gloſſary.*

land

land was involved, now ſeemed inevitable: but this Ethelwolf himſelf prevented, by complying with the greateſt part of his ſon's pretenſions; for reſerving to himſelf the eaſtern part of the kingdom, which was eſteemed the leaſt conſiderable, and the moſt expoſed, he delivered to Ethelbald, the ſovereignty of the weſtern; and immediately ſummoning the ſtates of the whole kingdom, conferred an important perpetual donation on the church.

In thoſe days of ignorance, the eccleſiaſtics made rapid advances in power and wealth. Not content with the land given to them by the Saxon princes and nobles, and with the temporary oblations offered by the people, they caſt their eyes on a vaſt revenue, which they claimed as a divine and indefeaſible right. Though but little acquainted with the ſcriptures, they had diſcovered, that under the Jewiſh law, a tenth of all the produce of land was conferred on the prieſts, and forgetting what themſelves taught, that only the moral part of that law was obligatory on Chriſtians, they inſiſted that this donation conveyed a perpetual property, inherent by divine right in thoſe who officiated at the altar. The whole ſcope of their ſermons had been long directed to this purpoſe; for though pariſhes had been inſtituted in England two centuries before, the eccleſiaſtics had never yet been able to get poſſeſſion of the tythes; they therefore ſeized this favourable opportunity, and prevailed on this weak and ſuperſtitious prince, to grant them a charter for receiving the tythes of all England,

which, as hath been already ſaid, was confirmed by the ſtates of the whole kingdom; and this was eſteemed ſo meritorious an act, that the Engliſh, truſting entirely to a ſupernatural aſſiſtance, neglected the ordinary means of ſafety; and in this deſperate extremity agreed, that the revenues of the church ſhould be exempted from all burthens.

ETHELBALD *and* ETHELBERT.

Ethelwolph died two years after his making the above grant, and left, by will, the kingdom to his two eldeſt ſons, the weſt part of England to Ethelbald, and the eaſt to Ethelbert. Ethelbald was a debauched prince, and gave great offence to the people by marrying Judith, his mother-in-law; but was at laſt perſuaded to divorce her, by the remonſtrances of Swithun, biſhop of Wincheſter. After a ſhort reign, he died in 860, and his brother Ethelbert ſucceeded to the government of all England. He was a virtuous prince; but his kingdom was ſtill infeſted by the Danes, who landing at Southampton, ſacked and burnt Wincheſter, but were there defeated. Alſo a body of theſe pirates, who were ſeated in the iſle of Thanet, having deceived the Engliſh by a treaty, unexpectedly committed great ravages in Kent. Ethelbert died in 866, and was ſucceeded by his brother Ethered.

ETHERED.

This prince, though he defended himſelf with bravery, was, during his whole reign, diſturb-

diſturbed by the irruptions of the Danes. He was ſeconded in all his enterprizes by Alfred, his younger brother, who generouſly ſacrificed to the public good his reſentment at being excluded from a large inheritance left him by his father.

The Danes firſt landed among the Eaſt-Angles, who being more anxious for their preſent ſafety, than for the good of the country, not only entered into a ſeparate treaty with them, but furniſhed them with horſes, by which means they marched northward, and ſeized the city of York, which they defended againſt Ælla and Oſbricht, two Northumbrian princes, who periſhed in the aſſault. The Danes, encouraged by this ſucceſs, ventured in 870 to leave the ſea-coaſt, under the command of Hinguar and Hubba, their chieftains; and penetrating into Mercia, took up their winter quarters at Nottingham. Ethered, and his brother Alfred, followed them with a great army, diſlodged them, and obliged them to retreat into Northumberland: but their avidity for plunder did not allow them to remain long there: they marched into Eaſt-Anglia, defeated Edmund, the tributary king of that country, whom they murdered in cold blood, and committed the greateſt ravages, particularly on the monaſteries.

The next year the Danes took their ſtation at Reading, whence they made incurſions into the neighbouring country. The Mercians, in this extremity, reſolving to ſhake off their dependence, refuſed to join Ethered with their

forces, on which that prince marched with his brother againſt the enemy, with only his hereditary ſubjects, the Weſt-Saxons, and defeated the Danes, who afterwards ſhut themſelves up in their garriſon; whence making a ſally, they routed the Weſt-Saxons, and obliged them to raiſe the ſiege. Soon after there was another battle at Aſton, in Berkſhire, where, in the beginning, the Engliſh were in danger of a total defeat: for as Alfred advanced with one diviſion of the army, he was ſurrounded in a diſadvantageous ſpot; and Ethered, who was then hearing maſs, refuſed to come to his aſſiſtance till it was finiſhed; but he afterwards came and gained the victory. Another battle was ſoon after fought at Baſing, where the Danes had the advantage; and being reinforced by a new army, became daily more formidable. In the midſt of theſe confuſions, Ethered died of a wound he had received in a battle with the Danes; and thus, in 871, left his diſtreſſed kingdom to his brother Alfred.

ALFRED.

This great prince, gave early marks of thoſe ſhining talents by which he ſaved his country from utter ruin. The year after his return from Rome, with Ethelwolf his father, he was ſent thither again, and on his coming back, became every day more the object of his father's affection; but being indulged in all youthful pleaſures, his education was neglected, ſo that at twelve years of age he was ignorant of the firſt elements of literature; but the recital of

Saxon

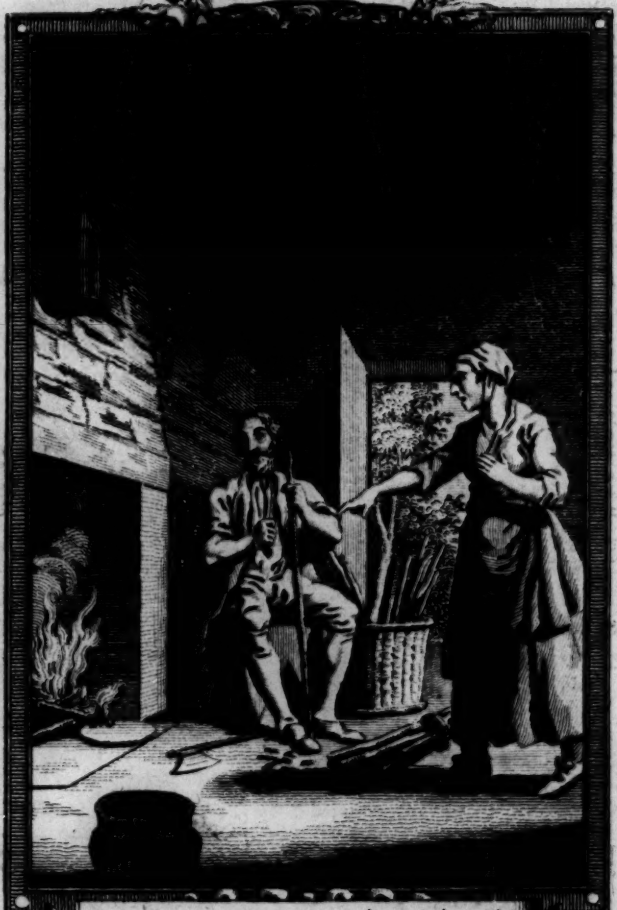
ALFRED.

Saxon poems, in which his mother took delight, expanded thoſe noble and elevated ſentiments which he had received from nature. Stimulated by his own ardent wiſhes, he ſoon learned to read thoſe compoſitions; and proceeded thence to learn the Latin tongue, in which he met with authors that better prompted his heroic ſpirit, and directed his generous views.

In the midſt of theſe purſuits he was called to the throne, when twenty-two years of age, in preference to his brother's children, both by his father's will, the wiſhes of the whole nation, and the urgency of public affairs. He had but juſt buried his brother, when he was obliged to take the field, in order to oppoſe the Danes, who had ſeized Wilton, and were ravaging all the country round. He marched with a few troops haſtily aſſembled, and gave them battle; but by purſuing his victory too far, the enemy, by the ſuperiority of their numbers, recovered the day. However, their loſs was ſo conſiderable, that they were contented to ſtipulate for a ſafe retreat, and promiſed to leave the kingdom. For that purpoſe they were conducted to London, where they were allowed to take up their winter quarters; but they immediately began to ravage the neighbouring country; on which Burrhed, king of Mercia, in whoſe territories London was ſituated, prevailed on them, by preſents, to remove to Lindſey, in Lincolnſhire, a country which they had already ruined. Finding, therefore, no means of gratifying their love of rapine, they ſuddenly returned into Mercia, and fixing

their ſtation at Repton, in Derbyſhire, laid the country deſolate with fire and ſword. On which Burrhed, deſpairing of ſucceſs againſt ſuch powerful and perfidious enemies, fled to Rome, and took ſhelter in a monaſtery. This prince was Alfred's brother-in-law, and the laſt who had the title of king of Mercia.

The Weſt-Saxons were now the only power that remained in England, and they, though ſupported by Alfred's abilities and vigilance, were unable to oppoſe the enemies that invaded them from all quarters. In 875, a new ſwarm of Danes landed under three princes, Guthrum, Oſcitel, and Amund; part of them marched into Northumberland, where they fixed their reſidence; part of them took up their quarters at Cambridge, and the next ſummer marched from thence and ſeized Wereham, in Dorſetſhire, the very center of Alfred's dominions. That prince ſo ſtraitened them in their quarters, that they entered into a treaty with him, and agreed to leave the country. Alfred obliged them to ſwear upon the holy reliques, that they would obſerve the treaty; expecting, that if they violated this oath, it would draw upon them the vengeance of heaven. But the Danes, regardleſs of this danger, ſuddenly attacked and defeated Alfred's army; and marching weſtward, took poſſeſſion of Exeter. But collecting freſh forces, he acted with ſuch vigour, that he fought eight battles with them in one year, and reduced them to the utmoſt extremity. He however hearkened to new propoſals of peace, and conſented to their ſettling



S. Wale del. *Alfred the great secreting himself and serving a Cowherd.* J. Collyer junr. fc.

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ding in England, where they were to oppoſe the landing of any other invaders. But while he was expecting the execution of this treaty, ſo much to the advantage of the Danes themſelves, another body landed, and after collecting the ſcattered troops of their country, ſurprized Chippenham, then a conſiderable town, and exerciſed their uſual ravages all around them.

The ſpirit of the Saxons was now broke; they were reduced to deſpair; and they believed themſelves abandoned by heaven to deſtruction; ſome retired into Wales, or fled by ſea, while others ſubmitted to the conquerors. Every one's attention being fixed on his own preſervation, was deaf to the king's exhortations, to make one effort more in defence of his prince, his country, and his liberty. Alfred himſelf was obliged to diſmiſs his ſervants, and to ſeek ſhelter in the meaneſt diſguiſes, from the purſuit of his enemies. He concealed himſelf under a peaſant's habit, and lived ſome time in the houſe of one of his own cowherds. The wife of the cowherd was ignorant of the rank of her royal gueſt; and ſeeing him one day buſy by the fire-ſide, in trimming his bow and arrows, ſhe deſired him to take care of ſome cakes that were baking at the fire, while ſhe was employed in other domeſtic affairs: but Alfred, whoſe thoughts were otherwiſe engaged, forgot the cakes, and the good woman on her return finding them burnt, ſcolded the king very ſeverely, upbraiding him, that he was always willing enough to eat her hot cakes,

though

though he was ſo negligent in baking them. On which the patient prince begged her pardon, and promiſed to take more care for the future.

Alfred at length finding that his enemies became more remiſs in their ſearch after him, collected ſome of his followers, retired into a ſpot, now called the iſle of Athelney, and building a habitation upon it, he was here ſecure by its fortifications, and ſtill more by the unknown roads which led to it, and by the foreſts and moraſſes with which it was ſurrounded. He thence made frequent ſallies upon the Danes, and ſubſiſted himſelf and followers by the plunder he acquired; and thus, by ſmall ſucceſſes, gave them room to hope, that notwithſtanding his preſent low condition, he might again lead them on to victory.

Here Alfred lay concealed near a twelvemonth, when the news of a proſperous event called him thence. Hubba, the Dane, after ſpreading fire and ſlaughter over Wales, landed in Devonſhire, and laid ſiege to Kenwith caſtle, near the mouth of the river Tau. There Oddune, earl of Devonſhire, with his followers, had taken ſhelter; and, being in want of proviſions, reſolved, by ſome vigorous blow, to prevent the neceſſity of ſubmitting to the enemy. Making, therefore, a ſudden ſally on the Danes, before ſun-riſing, when they were unprepared, he put them to flight, purſued them with great ſlaughter, killed Hubba himſelf, and took the famous *reafen*, or enchanted ſtandard, which had the figure of a raven; and in this ſtandard

ſtandard the Danes placed great confidence, it being made with many magic incantations.

Alfred now left his retreat; but, before he would aſſemble his ſubjects in arms, reſolved to view in perſon the ſituation of the enemy. For this purpoſe he entered their camp in the diſguiſe of a harper, and paſſing unſuſpected thro' every quarter, ſo entertained the Danes with his muſic and facetious humours, that he met with a favourable reception; and was even introduced to the tent of Guthrum, their prince, where he ſtaid ſome days. He obſerved the ſupine ſecurity of the Danes, their contempt of the Engliſh, and their negligence in foraging and plundering. On his leaving the camp, he ſecretly ſent to the moſt conſiderable of his ſubjects, and ſummoned them to attend him with their warlike followers at Brixton, on the borders of Selwood foreſt. The Engliſh, who had found the inſolence and rapine of their conquerors more intolerable than all their paſt fatigues and dangers, joyfully reſorted thither on the day appointed. On his appearance, they received him with ſhouts of applauſe, and could not ſatiate their eyes with the ſight of their beloved king, whom they had long regarded as dead, and now with voice and looks that expreſſed his confidence of ſucceſs, called them to liberty and to vengeance.

Alfred led them to the Daniſh camp at Eddington, and directed his attack againſt the moſt unguarded quarter of the enemy. The Danes, in the utmoſt confuſion at ſeeing an army of Engliſh, whom they thought entirely ſubdued,

ſubdued, were ſoon put to flight with great ſlaughter. The remainder, with their prince, fled to a fortified camp, where they were beſieged, and being ſoon reduced to extremity for want of proviſions, had recourſe to the clemency of the victor. Alfred not only gave them their lives, but formed a ſcheme for rendering them his faithful ſubjects. As Eaſt-Anglia and Northumberland were entirely deſolated by the frequent ravages of the Danes, he propoſed to repeople them, by ſettling there Guthrum and his followers, where they might ſerve as a rampart againſt any future incurſions of their countrymen. But, before he ratified theſe mild conditions, he required them, as a pledge of their ſincerity, to embrace the Chriſtian religion; to this they conſented, and, after very little inſtruction, they were all admitted to baptiſm.

This expedient for a conſiderable time correſponded with Alfred's hopes; for the greateſt part of the Danes ſettled peaceably in their new quarters; ſome ſmaller bodies of them, diſperſed in Mercia, were ſettled at Lincoln, Stamford, Nottingham, Leiceſter, and Derby, and were thence called the Fif or Five Burghers. The moſt turbulent made an expedition to France under the command of Haſtings; and the country was, for ſeveral years, free from the incurſions of theſe barbarians, excepting only one body of Danes, who ſailed up the Thames, and landed at Fulham, when, finding the country in a poſture of defence, they ſuddenly retreated to their ſhips.

This interval of tranquillity was employed by Alfred, in providing againſt the return of ſuch dreadful calamities; in eſtabliſhing civil and military inſtitutions, and in bringing the minds of men to ſubmit to induſtry, and the laws of juſtice. As equality among ſubjects is a great ſource of concord, he allowed the Danes the ſame laws as the Engliſh, and placed them on the ſame footing with reſpect to civil and criminal juſtice: and the fine for the murder of a Dane was the ſame with that for the murder of an Engliſhman.

After rebuilding the ruined towns, he cauſed all his people to be armed and regiſtered; he diſtributed part into caſtles and fortreſſes, which he erected in proper places; he obliged another part to take the field on any alarm, and to aſſemble at ſtated places of rendezvous; while he left a ſufficient number at home to cultivate the land, who afterwards took their turn in the military ſervice. He provided a naval force, which had hitherto been neglected, trained his ſubjects as well in the practice of ſailing as in naval action, and diſtributing his armed veſſels in proper ſtations round the iſland, was ſure to meet the Daniſh ſhips before or after their troops were landed, and to purſue them in all their incurſions. A fleet of a hundred and twenty ſhips of war was ſtationed upon the coaſt, and being provided with warlike engines, as well as with expert ſeamen, ſome of whom were foreigners, he maintained a ſuperiority over thoſe ſmaller bands which had often infeſted England. But, in 899, Haſtings, the famous Daniſh

Daniſh chief, after ravaging the coaſt of France, appeared on the Kentiſh coaſt with a fleet of 330 ſail, when the greateſt part of the enemy diſembarked in the Rother, and ſeized the fort of Appledore. Haſtings himſelf, with a fleet of 80 ſail, entered the Thames, fortified Milton in Kent, and, ſpreading over the country, began to commit the moſt dreadful ravages. But Alfred flew to the defence of his people, at the head of a ſelect body of ſoldiers, whom he always kept about his perſon, and collecting the militia from all parts, cut off all the ſtraggling parties, that were drawn by a love of plunder to a diſtance from their chief encampment. Whence the Danes, inſtead of increaſing their ſpoils, were cooped up in their fortifications, and obliged to ſubſiſt on the plunder they had brought from France. Tired of this ſituation, which muſt in the end prove ruinous, they roſe from their encampment at Appledore, in order to croſs the Thames into Eſſex, But the watchful Alfred encountered and routed them at Farnham, ſeized all their horſes and baggage, and chaſed them to their ſhips, which carried them up the Colne to Merſey in Eſſex, where they entrenched themſelves. At the ſame time Haſtings, deſerting Milton, took poſſeſſion of Bamflete in the ſame county, and haſtily threw up fortifications.

Unfortunately Guſtrum, prince of the Eaſt-Anglian Danes, and Guthred, whom the king had appointed governor of the Northumbrians, were now dead; and their reſtleſs tribes, no longer reſtrained by the authority of their prince,

prince, and encouraged by the landing of ſo great a body of their countrymen, ſhook off the authority of Alfred, and, embarking on board 240 veſſels, appeared before Exeter. On which Alfred, having left ſome forces at London, to oppoſe the other Danes, marched ſuddenly to the weſt, and, attacking them by ſurprize, purſued them to their ſhips with great ſlaughter. They then ſailed to Suſſex, and began to plunder the country near Colcheſter; but the order, which Alfred had every where eſtabliſhed, was ſufficient, without his preſence, for the defence of the place; and the rebels being again repulſed, many of them ſlain, and ſome of their ſhips taken, they again put to ſea, and never attempted any other enterprize.

In the mean time, the invaders in Eſſex, having united under Haſtings, advanced into the inland country, ravaging all around them; but the Engliſh army in London, aſſiſted by a body of the citizens, attacking their intrenchments at Bamflete, routed them, and, after a great ſlaughter, carried off Haſtings's wife and two ſons. But Alfred generouſly reſtored thoſe captives to Haſtings, on condition of his leaving the iſland.

Tho' Alfred had thus removed this dangerous enemy, great numbers of the pyratical Danes, after Haſtings's departure, ſeized and fortified Shobury at the mouth of the Thames; and leaving a garriſon there, marched along the river to Boddington in Glouceſterſhire, where, being joined by ſome of the Welch, they threw up entrenchments. Alfred ſurrounded them,

with all his forces; and tho' he had a certain proſpect of victory, reſolved to ſubdue them by famine, rather than by aſſault. After being reduced to ſuch extremities that many of them periſhed with hunger, they made a deſperate ſally, in which moſt of them periſhed, tho' a conſiderable body made their eſcape. Theſe for ſome time roved about, purſued by Alfred; they made a ſucceſsful attack on Leiceſter; defended themſelves in Hertford, and then eſcaped to Quatford, where they were broken and ſubdued. The ſmall remains of them either eſcaped to their countrymen in Eaſt-Anglia and Northumberland, or, having again recourſe to the ſea, exerciſed pyracy, under the command of Sigefert, a Northumbrian, who had framed veſſels of a new conſtruction, longer, higher, and ſwifter than thoſe of the Engliſh: but Alfred, by his ſuperior ſkill, improved upon theirs, built higher and ſwifter ſhips, and attacking them, while they were committing their ravages in the weſt, took twenty of their ſhips, and, having tried all the priſoners at Wincheſter, cauſed them to be hanged as pyrates.

This ſeverity, with the excellent methods he took for the defence of England, ſecured the tranquillity of the government. The Northumbrian and Eaſt-Anglian Danes, on his firſt appearance on their frontiers, made the moſt humble ſubmiſſions, and the Welch acknowledged his authority. Thus this great prince, by his wiſdom, juſtice, and valour, eſtabliſhed his dominion from the frontiers of Scotland to the Engliſh channel.

Tho'

Tho' Alfred had ſubdued, ſettled, or expelled the Danes, he found the kingdom deſolated by the ravages of thoſe barbarians, and involved in diſorders that threatened to perpetuate its miſery. There were many ſtraggling troops of that nation roving about the country, and committing the greateſt violence. The Engliſh themſelves, reduced by theſe continued depredations, had ſhaken off the bands of government, and, from deſpair, many joined thoſe robbers in pillaging their countrymen. Alfred, to put a ſtop to theſe diſorders, and render the execution of juſtice ſtrict and regular, divided England into counties; theſe he ſubdivided into hundreds, and hundreds into tythings.—— Every houſeholder was anſwerable for the behaviour of his family, and even of his gueſts, if they lived with him above three days. Ten neighbouring houſeholders formed into one corporation, under the name of a tything or decennary, were anſwerable for each other's conduct, and over them was appointed a tything-man or head-borough; every man was puniſhed as an out-law, who did not regiſter himſelf in ſome tything; and none could change his habitation without a certificate from the tything-man.

If any perſon was guilty of a crime, if a tything-man was unwilling to be ſurety for his appearance, the criminal was committed to priſon, and detained there till his trial. If he fled, either before or after finding ſureties, thirty-one days were allowed for producing the criminal, and if that time elapſed, without

their being able to find him, the tything-man, with two other members of the decennary, was obliged to appear, together with three chief members of the three neighbouring tythings, making twelve in all, to ſwear, that his decennary was not privy to the criminal's eſcape; and, if the tything-man could not find ſuch a number to anſwer for their innocence, the decennary was obliged to pay a fine to the king, according to the nature of the offence. By this inſtitution every man was, for his own ſafety, obliged to keep a watchful eye over his neighbour's conduct. Tho' this ſtrict regulation, in a poliſhed ſtate, might be thought deſtructive of liberty, it was excellently calculated to reduce a fierce and licentious people under the reſtraint of law and government. But Alfred tempered theſe rigours with a moſt excellent plan for the adminiſtration of juſtice.

The tything-man ſummoned his whole decennary to decide the ſmall differences that aroſe among its members. In affairs of greater importance, as in appeals from the decennary, or in controverſies ariſing between the members of different decennaries, the cauſe was brought before the hundred, which conſiſted of a hundred families of free-men, and was regularly aſſembled once a month, for the deciding of cauſes. Their method of deciſion is worthy of remark, as being the origin of the admirable inſtitution of juries. Twelve freeholders were choſen, who, with the preſiding magiſtrate of that diviſion, having ſworn to adminiſter impartial juſtice, proceeded to the examination of the

the cauſe, and paſſed ſentence accordingly. There was alſo an annual meeting for the enquiry into crimes, the correction of abuſes in magiſtrates, and to oblige every perſon to ſhew the tything in which he was regiſtered. Here the people, in imitation of their German anceſtors, aſſembled in arms, whence the hundred was ſometimes called a wapentake; and its court ſerved both for the adminiſtration of civil juſtice, and the ſupport of military diſcipline.

Beſides theſe, there was a county court, which met twice a year, after Michaelmas and Eaſter. There lay alſo an appeal from all theſe courts to the king himſelf in council; and, as the people were ſenſible of the equity and extraordinary abilities of Alfred, he was ſoon overwhelmed with appeals from all parts of England. He was indefatigable in the diſpatch of theſe cauſes; when, finding they would take up all his time, he reſolved to correct the ignorance or corruption of the inferior magiſtrates, from which it aroſe. He took care to have the people inſtructed, puniſhed all who made an ill uſe of their office, and framed a body of laws, which, tho' now loſt, is generally eſteemed the origin of what is called the common law of England. He alſo appointed regular meetings of the ſtates of England twice a year, in London.

Tho' Alfred was not the ſole author of this plan of government, and contented himſelf with reforming, extending and executing the inſtitutions he found previouſly eſtabliſhed by his Saxon anceſtors, ſuch ſucceſs attended his legiſlation, that every thing ſuddenly bore a new

face in England, and ſuch a reformation was wrought, and the general police was ſo exact, that we are told, Alfred, by way of bravado, hung up golden bracelets near the highway, and no man dared to touch them.

Alfred's encouragement of learning among his ſubjects alſo tended to reclaim the Engliſh from their former diſſolute and ſavage manners. On his aſcending the throne, the nation was ſunk into the groſſeſt ignorance and barbariſm. He himſelf complains, that he knew not one perſon ſouth of the Thames that could interpret the Latin ſervice, and very few in the northern parts who were able to do it. He invited over the moſt celebrated ſcholars from all parts of Europe; eſtabliſhed ſchools for the inſtruction of the people; founded, or at leaſt repaired, the univerſity of Oxford, and endowed it with many privileges; and enjoined by law all freeholders poſſeſſed of two hydes of land * or more, to ſend their children to ſchool. He alſo gave preferment, both in the church and ſtate, to none but ſuch as had made ſome proficiency in learning.

This he likewiſe encouraged by his own example. He was aſſiduous in his ſtudies; and this martial hero, who fought in perſon fifty-ſix battles by ſea and land, acquired more knowledge, and even compoſed more books than moſt ſtudious men, that have been bleſſed with the greateſt leiſure and application. He

* A hyde contained as much land as was ſufficient to employ one plough, and is ſaid to have conſiſted of about a hundred acres.

endeavoured

A DANE. A SAXON.

From Speed.

W. Walker sculp.

endeavoured to convey his morality by apologues, parables, and tales in poetry. He tranſlated from the Greek the fables of Æſop, gave tranſlations of Oroſius's and Bede's hiſtories, and of Boethius on the conſolation of philoſophy.

In the mean time, he invited from all quarters induſtrious foreigners, to re-people his country, which had been laid waſte by the ravages of the Danes. He introduced and encouraged manufactures of all kinds, and ſuffered no inventor or improver of an ingenious art to go unrewarded. He encouraged navigation, and prompted men of activity to trade with the moſt remote countries, and acquire wealth by commerce. In ſhort, this great prince, who, both in public and private life, may with advantage be ſet in oppoſition to that of any other monarch, which the annals of any age or nation can produce, died in 901, after a glorious reign of twenty-nine years and a half, in which he deſervedly obtained the appellation of Alfred the Great, and the title of founder of the Engliſh monarchy. He was ſucceeded by his ſon Edward, who, from his being the firſt Engliſh prince of that name, is generally ſtiled Edward the Elder.

EDWARD THE ELDER.

Tho' this prince was inferior to his father in learning, he equalled him in military talents, and had no ſooner aſcended the throne, than he was involved in war. Ethelwald, the ſon of king Ethelbert, the elder brother of Alfred, in-

ſiſting

ſiſting on his ſuperior title, armed thoſe of his party, and took poſſeſſion of Winburne, where he appeared determined to defend himſelf to the laſt extremity; but, on Edward's approaching the town with a great army, he fled into Normandy, and thence into Northumberland. The Northumbrians, whom Alfred had ſubdued, declared for him, as he expected; and having thus connected his intereſt with the Daniſh tribes, he went beyond ſea, and excited the hopes of all who had been accuſtomed to live by violence and rapine. The Eaſt-Anglian Danes joined his party, as alſo did the Five-burghers, who were ſeated in the heart of Mercia; and the Engliſh found themſelves again menaced by the ravages from which they had been redeemed by the valour and policy of Alfred. Ethelwald, at the head of the rebels, ravaged the counties of Glouceſter, Oxford, and Wilts, and retired with the booty, before the king could come up with them. Edward, therefore, conducted his forces into Eaſt-Anglia, and retaliated the injuries the inhabitants had committed, ravaging their country; till ſatiated with revenge, and loaded with booty, he gave orders to retire; but the Kentiſh men, greedy of more ſpoils, ventured, contrary to repeated orders, to ſtay behind him, and take up their quarters in Bury: a diſobedience that proved of great advantage to Edward; for the Danes attacked the Kentiſh men, but met with ſo bold a reſiſtance, that, though they gained the battle, they loſt their braveſt leaders, and among the reſt Ethelwald; on which the king made a peace with the Eaſt-Angles.

Edward

Edward now, in order to divert the forces of the Northumbrians, ſent a fleet againſt them, hoping that this would oblige them to remain at home, and provide for their defence: but the Northumbrians were more greedy of ſpoiling their enemies, than anxious of ſecuring their own property; and, ſuppoſing that the ſtrength of the Engliſh was embarked on board the fleet, they entered Edward's territories with all their forces. The king, however, attacked and routed them at Tetenhall, in Staffordſhire, recovered all the booty, and purſued them into their own country with great ſlaughter.

All the reſt of this prince's reign was taken up with ſucceſsful wars againſt the Northumbrians, the Five-burghers, and the foreign Danes, by whom he was invaded. He fortified the towns of Colcheſter, Huntingdon, Malden, Buckingham, Eddeſbury, Cherbury, Warwick, and Cheſter. He fought two ſignal battles at Temsford and Malden; he vanquiſhed Thurketill, a great Daniſh chief, and obliged him to leave the kingdom; ſubdued the Eaſt-Angles, whom he forced to ſwear allegiance to him; expelled Reginald and Sidroc, two rival princes of Northumberland, and acquired the dominion of that province: he ſubdued ſeveral tribes of the Britons, and even obliged the Scots to give him marks of ſubmiſſion. He was aſſiſted in all theſe ſucceſsful enterprizes by the activity and prudence of his ſiſter Ethelfleda, who was the widow of his brother Ethelbert, earl of Mercia.

Edward,

Edward, during the remainder of his reign, aſſumed the immediate government of Mercia, which had before been entruſted to the authority of a governor. After having reduced the whole kingdom of England and principality of Wales to his obedience, he exerted all his endeavours to promote the equal diſtribution of juſtice; and the people enjoyed the happy fruits of his mild and equitable government till his death, which happened in 925, in the twenty-fifth year of his reign.

ATHELSTAN.

Edward was ſucceeded in his throne by this prince, who was his natural ſon, a circumſtance, which, in thoſe times, was not eſteemed ſufficient to exclude him from the poſſeſſion of the crown; and he, being of an age and capacity fit for government, obtained the preference to Edward's other children, who, tho' legitimate, were too young to rule a nation ſo greatly expoſed to domeſtic calamities and foreign invaſions. He met with ſome commotions on his acceſſion, from the oppoſition of Alfred, a nobleman, who entered into conſpiracy againſt him; but, this being ſoon quelled, he endeavoured to give ſecurity to the government, by providing againſt the inſurrections of the Danes. For this purpoſe he marched into Northumberland, where finding that the inhabitants bore the Engliſh yoke with impatience, he conferred on Sithric, a Daniſh nobleman, the title of king, and attached him to his intereſt by giving him his ſiſter Editha in marriage. This ſtep, which

which appeared to be dictated by a prudent policy, was attended with unhappy conſequences; for Sithric dying within a twelvemonth, Anlaf and Godfrid, his two ſons by a former marriage, aſſumed the ſovereignty, without waiting for Athelſtan's conſent. They were, however, ſoon expelled by that monarch, when the former retired into Ireland, and the latter into Scotland, where he was protected by Conſtantine, who was then on the throne. That prince being, however, continually ſollicited, and even threatened by Athelſtan, at laſt promiſed to deliver up his gueſt; but being too generous to be guilty of ſuch treachery, gave Godfrid warning to make his eſcape; after which that prince ſubſiſted by piracy for ſome years, till the king was freed from any further anxiety about him by his death. This behaviour was highly reſented by Athelſtan, who marched into Scotland, and, ravaging the country with impunity, reduced the Scots to ſuch diſtreſs, that Conſtantine, being in danger of loſing his crown, was contented to preſerve it by making ſubmiſſions to the enemy.

Mean while Athelſtan was filled with inquietude from the popularity of his brother Edwin, he being told by one of his nobles, that he had been concerned in Alfred's conſpiracy; but, though the unhappy youth proteſted, with the appearance of the utmoſt truth and candour, that he was innocent of the crime laid to his charge, he was convicted on the teſtimony of that nobleman; when Athelſtan, being afraid to take away his life by a public execution, ordered

dered the unhappy youth to be turned adrift with one ſervant, in a crazy veſſel, without ſails, oars, or proviſions. Edwin, on ſeeing himſelf thus expoſed to the dangers of the deep, and the horrors of famine, leaped overboard into the ſea, and was drowned; while his attendant, reſolving to depend upon Providence, continued in the boat, which was caſt aſhore on the coaſt of France. No ſooner was this cruel ſentence executed, and the king's jealous fears removed, than he viewed Edwin in the light of an amiable brother, and began to deteſt the man, on whoſe ſingle evidence he had thus been expoſed to a terrible death. One day that nobleman, who was an officer of the houſhold, on going to preſent the cup to Athelſtan, ſtumbled, but inſtantly recovering a firm footing, by means of his other leg, cried, "See how one brother aſſiſts another." This remark ſtruck Athelſtan in ſuch a manner, that he ordered him to be put to death, for being the cauſe of his loſing a brother: after which he endeavoured to expiate his own guilt by ſevere penances and benefactions to the church.

Though Conſtantine owed the advantage of ſtill poſſeſſing the crown to the moderation of Athelſtan, he thought that prince's behaviour was more an object of reſentment, than of gratitude. He entered into a confederacy with Anlaf, who had aſſembled a great number of Daniſh pyrates, and with ſeveral Welch princes, who were apprehenſive of Athelſtan's growing power; and all theſe in concert, made an irruption into England. Athelſtan aſſembling his

his forces, met the enemy near Brunſbury, in Northumberland, when both armies being extremely formidable, and advantageouſly poſted, neither choſe to hazard a battle till the inattention or miſconduct of either ſhould afford a favourable opportunity. During this pauſe, Anlaf employed the artifice formerly practiſed by Alfred againſt the Danes, and entered Athelſtan's camp in the habit of a minſtrel. The ſtratagem was, for the preſent, attended with the ſame ſucceſs; for the ſoldiers who flocked about him were ſo pleaſed with his muſic, that they introduced him to the king's tent; and Anlaf, after playing before Athelſtan and his nobles during their repaſt, was diſmiſſed with a handſome reward. He was too prudent to refuſe the preſent; but on his departure, his pride made him reſolve to bury it, while he fancied no body ſaw him; but a ſoldier in Athelſtan's camp, who had before ſerved under Anlaf, had, on the firſt appearance of the minſtrel, been ſtruck with ſome ſuſpicion, and was prompted, by curioſity, to watch all his motions. This laſt action he conſidered as a full proof, that it was Anlaf in diſguiſe; and inſtantly communicated this intelligence to Athelſtan, who blamed him for not informing him of this ſooner, when he had an opportunity of ſeizing him; but the ſoldier obſerved, that as he had ſworn fealty to Anlaf, he ſhould never have forgiven himſelf, had he treacherouſly betrayed and ruined his former maſter; and that the king himſelf, after ſuch an inſtance of treachery, would have reaſon to doubt

of his allegiance. Athelſtan, after praiſing the ſoldier's principles, reflected, that this incident might be attended with important conſequences. He therefore removed his ſtation in the camp, and that evening a biſhop arriving with a reinforcement of troops, he, with his train, took poſſeſſion of the ſpot which had been left empty by the king's removal. Athelſtan's precaution was ſoon found to have been dictated by prudence; for it was no ſooner dark, than Anlaf broke into the camp, and haſting directly to the place where the king's tent had ſtood, ſlew the biſhop before he had time to prepare for his defence. At day-break the two armies engaged, and fought all day with equal bravery on both ſides, till at length Turketul, the Engliſh chancellor, at the head of a ſelect band of Londoners, bearing down all before him, unhorſed the king of Scotland, who was wounded and taken priſoner. This prince's fate was no ſooner known to the reſt of the confederates, than they gave way, and a terrible ſlaughter enſued. Beſides Conſtantine, who died of his wounds, ſix kings of Ireland and Wales, and many generals and counts loſt their lives in this engagement.

After this ſucceſs, Athelſtan enjoyed his crown in tranquillity, and is conſidered as one of the ableſt Saxon princes, both in war and peace. He paſſed a law that was wiſely calculated for the encouragement of commerce: that a merchant, who had made three long ſea-voyages on his own account, ſhould be admitted to the rank of a thane, or gentleman. This

prince

prince died at Glouceſter in 941, after a reign of ſixteen years, and was, by the unanimous conſent of the whole nation, ſucceeded by Edmund his brother.

EDMUND.

This prince, on his acceſſion to the throne, met with diſturbance from the Northumbrians, who ſtill watched every opportunity of entering into rebellion. But Edmund ſuddenly marching into their country, the rebels were ſo overawed, that they ſtrove to appeaſe him by the meaneſt ſubmiſſions; and to give him a certain pledge of their obedience, offered to embrace Chriſtianity. This religion had been frequently profeſſed by the Engliſh Danes, when they were reduced to difficulties; but they had always deſerted it whenever they obtained a favourable opportunity. The king, placing little confidence in their ſincerity, took the precaution of removing the five burghers from the five towns of Mercia, where they had been allowed to ſettle, on account of thoſe Danes taking advantage of every commotion. He alſo conquered Cumberland from the Britons, and conferred it on Malcolm, king of Scotland, on condition of his doing him homage for it, and protecting the north of England from the Danes.

This prince was young when he aſcended the throne, and his reign was rendered ſhort, by a violent death. As he was one day celebrating a feſtival in Glouceſterſhire, he obſerved that Leolf, a notorious villain whom he had

baniſhed for theft and rapine, had the audacity to enter the hall where he himſelf was at dinner, and to ſit at table with his attendants. Enraged at his inſolence, he ordered him to leave the room, and on his refuſing to obey, ordered his ſewer to ſeize him; but perceiving that this officer was unable to manage him, he himſelf ſtarted from table, and being naturally choleric, ſeized him by the hair, and dragged him to the ground, when the ruffian thus puſhed to extremity, drew a dagger, which he had concealed under his cloaths, and ſheathed it in the boſom of his prince, who inſtantly expired. The noblemen immediately hewed the ruffian in pieces, but this was a poor atonement for the loſs of a valuable king, cut off in the flower of his youth, after a reign of about ſix years, in which he had ſhewn extraordinary courage, abilities, and regard for the welfare of his ſubjects. This event happened in 946. He left two ſons; but they being ſo young as to be incapable of governing the kingdom, Edred, his brother, ſucceeded him in the throne.

EDRED.

Immediately after the elevation of this prince, he marched into Northumberland, to quell the commotions which his brother's death had excited among the Danes of that province; but on his appearance with an army, they made their uſual ſubmiſſions, and the king, after laying waſte the country with fire and ſword, to puniſh their rebellion, obliged them to renew their oaths of allegiance, and then retired with

with his forces. Their obedience, however, laſted no longer than their preſent terror. Exaſperated at the deſolation Edred had made, and even reduced by neceſſity to ſubſiſt on plunder, they again rebelled, and were again ſubdued. Edred, now inſtructed by experience, fixed Engliſh garriſons in their moſt conſiderable towns, and placed over them an Engliſh governor to watch all their motions, and ſuppreſs the firſt appearance of any inſurrection. He alſo obliged Malcolm, king of Scotland, to renew his homage for that part of England in his poſſeſſion.

Though Edred was of an active and warlike diſpoſition, he was extremely ſuperſtitious, and blindly ſubmitted his conſcience to the guidance of Dunſtan, abbot of Glaſtonbury, whom he raiſed to the higheſt offices, and who, under the maſk of ſanctity, concealed the moſt bold ambition. This churchman taking advantage of this king's placing an implicit confidence in him, introduced into England the Benedictines, a new order of Monks, who immediately excited the moſt violent commotions.

The monaſteries in England had been hitherto filled by monks, who lived after the manner of the preſent prebendaries or canons, and were employed in the education of youth: they were not ſubject to the rigid rules of any order: they never made vows of implicit obedience to their ſuperiors: and were allowed to chuſe either a married or a ſingle life, without leaving the convent. But theſe new ſpecies of monks, called Benedictines, under the

appearance of mortification, renounced all claim to liberty, and made a merit of the moſt inviolable chaſtity. Celebacy now began to be extolled as the indiſpenſible duty of prieſts; and the pope undertook to make all the clergy throughout the weſtern world, renounce the privilege of marriage: an undertaking extremely difficult, as he had the ſtrongeſt propenſities of human nature to encounter. The praiſes of an inviolable chaſtity had been carried to the higheſt extravagance, by ſome of the firſt preachers of Chriſtianity among the Saxons, who had repreſented the pleaſures of love as inconſiſtent with chriſtian perfection, and an entire abſtinence from all commerce with the other ſex was deemed ſuch a meritorious penance, as was ſufficient to atone for the greateſt crimes; yet the inclinations of the prieſts had, during the courſe of near three centuries, retarded the execution of this bold ſcheme. But now a favourable opportunity offered itſelf, through the weak ſuperſtition of Edred, and the impetuous character of Dunſtan.

This celebrated monk had been educated under his uncle Adhelm, then archbiſhop of Canterbury, and having embraced the eccleſiaſtical life, had obtained ſome reputation in the court of Edmund; but being repreſented to that prince as a man of licentious morals, and finding his fortune blaſted by this cenſure, his ambition prompted him to repair his indiſcretions, by running into an oppoſite extreme. He ſecluded himſelf from the world; formed a cell

a cell ſo ſmall, that he could neither ſtand upright, nor lie at his length in it, and there perpetually employed himſelf in devotion, or in manual labour. It is not improbable, that his brain might be diſordered by theſe ſolitary occupations, and his head filled with chimeras. He fancied that the devil, who frequently viſited him, was one day more earneſt with his temptations than uſual, till Dunſtan, provoked at his importunity, ſeized him by the noſe with a pair of red hot pinchers, as he put his head into his cell, and held him there till he made the whole neighbourhood reſound with his bellowing. This fine exploit was ſeriouſly believed and extolled, not only by his ſtupid votaries, but by the public; and in that ignorant age, procured him ſuch a character for his ſanctity, as filled the people with the utmoſt veneration.

He now appeared again in the world; gained the confidence of Edred, who had ſucceeded to the throne; was placed at the head of the treaſury, and became his counſellor in the moſt important affairs of government; when finding that his advancement was owing to the opinion of his auſterity, he profeſſed himſelf a patron of the rigid monaſtic rules, and after introducing that pretended reformation into the monaſteries of Glaſtonbury and Abingdon, endeavoured to make it univerſal throughout the kingdom. To render their rivals, the ſecular clergy, as odious as poſſible, every inſtance of diſſoluteneſs in that order, was now pretended as a general corruption, and where other

other ſlanderous topics were wanting, their marriage became a general ſubject of invective, and their wives received the name of concubines. On the other hand, the ſecular clergy, who were numerous, rich, and poſſeſſed of eccleſiaſtical dignities, vigorouſly defended themſelves.

In the midſt of theſe diſputes, Edred died in 953, after a reign of nine years. He left three children; but they being infants, he was ſucceeded by Edwy, the ſon of his brother Edmund.

EDWY.

This prince, at the time of his obtaining the crown, was not more than ſixteen or ſeventeen years of age. He had a moſt amiable figure, and, according to authentic accounts, was endowed with the moſt promiſing virtues; but at the commencement of his reign, he was engaged in a controverſy with the monks, who have purſued his memory with the ſame unrelenting fury, which they exerciſed againſt his perſon, during his ſhort and unhappy reign. Elgiva, a beautiful princeſs of the royal blood, had made an impreſſion on his heart; and being of an age when the force of the paſſions begin to be felt, he had eſpouſed her, contrary to the advice of his graveſt counſellors, and the remonſtrances of the dignified clergy, though ſhe was within the prohibited degrees of affinity. As the monks behaved with particular violence on this occaſion, Edwy became greatly prepoſſeſſed againſt them, and on that account, ſeemed reſolved not to ſecond their project of expelling

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the ſeculars from all the monaſteries, and obtaining the poſſeſſion of thoſe rich eſtabliſhments. The monks therefore declared war againſt the king, and ſoon obliged him to repent his provoking ſuch dangerous enemies. On the day of his coronation, his nobility aſſembled in a great hall of his palace, where they indulged themſelves in the riot and diſorder that was then habitual to the Engliſh; while Edwy, attracted by ſofter pleaſures, retired into the queen's apartments, where he indulged his fondneſs for his wife, which was only checked by the preſence of her mother. Dunſtan gueſſing the reaſon of the king's retreat, took with him Odo, archbiſhop of Canterbury, and burſting into the apartment, upbraided Edwy with his laſciviouſneſs, and tearing him from her arms, puſhed him forward to the banquet of the nobles. Though Edwy was young, and had to ſtruggle with the prejudice of the people, he reſolved to be revenged for this inſult. He called Dunſtan to an account for his adminiſtration of the treaſury, during the reign of his predeceſſor, and on his refuſing to ſatisfy him with reſpect to the money which he alledged was expended by the late king's orders, he accuſed him of making an ill uſe of his office, and baniſhed him the kingdom. But during Dunſtan's abſence, his cabal was not inactive. Having poiſoned the minds of the people with the higheſt panegyrics on Dunſtan's ſanctity, and by preſenting the impiety of the king and queen, they proceeded to the moſt outrageous violations of the royal autho-

authority. A party of ſoldiers was ſent into the palace by archbiſhop Odo, who there ſeizing the queen, burned her face with a red hot iron, in order to deſtroy the beauty, by which Edwy had been ſeduced, and then carried her by force into Ireland. As Edwy found it in vain to reſiſt, he was obliged to conſent to his divorce, which was pronounced by Odo. However, the unhappy Elgiva being afterwards cured of her wounds without thoſe ſcars with which the archbiſhop had hoped to deface her beauty, returned to England, and was flying to the embraces of the king, whom ſhe ſtill conſidered as her huſband, when ſhe unhappily fell into the hands of a party ſent by the primate to intercept her. Her death was now thought neceſſary, for the ſecurity of Odo and the monks, and they reſolved to ſatiate their vengeance in the moſt cruel manner. She was ham-ſtringed, and a few days after expired at Glouceſter, in the moſt acute torments.

The people, blinded by ſuperſtition, inſtead of being ſhocked at this inhumanity, exclaimed, that the misfortunes of Edwy and his queen, were a judgment from heaven for their contempt of the eccleſiaſtical ſtatutes; and proceeding to rebellion, placed Edgar, the king's younger brother, at their head, though but thirteen years of age, and ſoon put him in poſſeſſion of Northumberland, Eaſt-Anglia, and Mercia; by obliging Edwy to retire into the ſouthern countries. Dunſtan now returning to England, was made biſhop of Worceſter, then raiſed to the ſee of London, and afterwards to that of Canter-

Canterbury. Mean while the unhappy Edwy was excommunicated, but dying ſoon after, Edgar obtained the peaceable poſſeſſion of the crown.

EDGAR.

This prince, tho' in ſuch early youth, had already given undeniable proofs of a ſhining genius, and the moſt ſolid underſtanding.—During his reign, he ſhewed no averſion to war, and made the moſt prudent preparations againſt any invaſions: whence he was enabled to indulge his inclination to peace, and to employ himſelf in improving his kingdom. He quartered a body of diſciplined troops in the north to keep the mutinous Northumbrians in ſubjection, and to repel thoſe of the Scots. He built and maintained a powerful navy; and ſtationing three ſquadrons off the coaſt, obliged them from time to time to make the circuit of his dominions. The foreign Danes did not dare to approach a country that appeared in ſuch a poſture of defence; and the domeſtic Danes ſaw, if they engaged in tumults and inſurrections, it would be attended with inevitable deſtruction. The king of Scotland, the princes of Wales, of the Orkneys, of the Iſle of Man, and even of Ireland, were obliged to pay their ſubmiſſions to ſo formidable a monarch. It is ſaid, that once reſiding at Cheſter, and propoſing to go by water to the abbey of St. John the Baptiſt, he obliged eight of his tributary princes to row him in a barge upon the Dee.

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But the principal means by which Edgar preſerved domeſtic peace, was by paying his court to Dunſtan and the monks, and favouring their ſcheme for diſpoſſeſſing the ſecular canons of all the monaſteries; and both he and the biſhop found ſuch advantages in their mutual agreement, that they always acted in concert; and united their influence in preſerving the general peace and tranquility. He himſelf made loud exclamations againſt the diſſolute lives of the ſecular clergy, and by his means, the monks prevailed, he obtained from them the higheſt panegyrics, though the uſual tenor of his private conduct was in the higheſt degree licentious. Among other enormities, he broke into a convent, carried off a nun, named Editha, by force, and even committed violence on her perſon, for which he was only reprimanded by Dunſtan, and obliged, in order to reconcile himſelf to the church, not to ſeparate from his miſtreſs, but to abſtain from wearing his crown for the ſpace of ſeven years; a very different puniſhment from that which had been inflicted on the unhappy Edwy, who, for a marriage that could only deſerve the name of irregular, had ſeen his queen treated with the moſt terrible inſults, and even cruelly murdered; and he himſelf expelled his kingdom.

He obtained another of his miſtreſſes in a ſingular manner. Edgar paſſing by Andover, lodged in the houſe of a nobleman, whoſe daughter being poſſeſſed of all the graces of perſon and behaviour, he became immediately inflamed, and reſolved to gratify his deſire: but

King Edgar's first sight of Elfrida.

S. Wale del. J. Coltyer junr. fc.

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but as he had not time for courtſhip, he went directly to her mother, and declaring the violence of his paſſion, deſired that the young lady might paſs that very night with him. The mother, however, reſolved not to diſhonour herſelf and her daughter by her compliance; but knowing the impetuoſity of the king's temper, pretended to ſubmit to his will, and ſecretly ordered a waiting-maid, named Elfleda, who had a very agreeable perſon, to ſteal into the king's bed, after they were all retired to reſt. In the morning, before day-break, the young woman, according to her miſtreſs's injunctions, offered to retire, but Edgar, whoſe love to his bed-fellow was rather inflamed by enjoyment, employed both entreaties and force to detain her; upon which Elfleda, truſting to her own charms, and to the love with which ſhe hoped ſhe had inſpired him, ſtayed till the return of light diſcovered the deceit, which, on Edgar's perceiving, he expreſſed no diſpleaſure at the old lady, on account of her fraud; and his love being transferred to Elfleda, ſhe became his favourite miſtreſs, and maintained her aſcendant over him, till his marriage with Elfrida.

This lady was the daughter and heireſs of Olgar, earl of Devonſhire. Elfrida had been educated in the country, and had never appeared at court; yet notwithſtanding her retired life, filled all England with the fame of her beauty. Edgar's curioſity was excited by the praiſes he heard beſtowed upon her; and reflecting on her noble birth, reſolved, that if ſhe

was ſo charming as fame had repreſented her, to obtain her on honourable terms. He communicated his intention to Athelwold, his favourite; and before he made any advances to her parents, ordered that nobleman to pay her father a viſit, and to bring him a particular account of his daughter's beauty. Athelwold, on being introduced to the young lady, thought her much more beautiful than ſhe had been repreſented; and being ſeized with the moſt violent paſſion, reſolved to ſacrifice his fidelity to his maſter, to his love; and returning to Edgar, told him, that the riches and high quality of Elfrida, had been the foundation of the admiration paid her, and that her charms would have been over-looked, in a woman of an inferior ſtation. Having thus diverted the king from his deſign, he ſome time after took the opportunity of turning the converſation again on Elfrida, and obſerved, that though her birth and fortune had not produced on him the ſame illuſion as on others, with reſpect to her beauty, he could not forbear reflecting, that upon the whole, ſhe would be an advantageous match for him, and that her birth and riches, would be a ſufficient recompence for the homelineſs of her perſon. If his majeſty approved of it, he was therefore deſirous to make propoſals to the earl of Devonſhire on his own behalf, and did not doubt of obtaining both his and the lady's conſent to the marriage. Edgar, pleaſed with the means of eſtabliſhing his favourite's fortune, not only perſuaded him to execute his purpoſe, but promoted his ſucceſs,

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by his recommendations to Elfrida's parents, and ſoon after Athelwold was made happy by marrying the lady. But dreading leſt his artifice ſhould be detected, he made uſe of every pretence for detaining Elfrida in the country, and for preventing her being ſeen by Edgar.

The violence of Athelwold's paſſion, had rendered him blind to the conſequences of his conduct, and to the advantage which the numerous enemies that always purſue the favourite of a king, would be able to obtain over him. Edgar was ſoon informed of the truth; but before he would execute his revenge on Athelwold, reſolved to be a witneſs of the full extent of his guilt, by ſeeing her. He told him, that he intended to pay him a viſit in his caſtle, and to be introduced to the acquaintance of his new-married lady. As Athelwold could not refuſe this honour, he begged leave to go a few hours before him, the better to prepare every thing for his reception. He then diſcovered the whole affair to Elfrida, and entreated her, if ſhe had any regard to her own honour, or to his life, to conceal from Edgar, by every part of her dreſs and behaviour, that fatal beauty which had ſeduced him from his fidelity. Elfrida promiſed compliance, though nothing was farther from her thoughts. She imagined herſelf little obliged to Athelwold, for a paſſion that had deprived her of a crown; and being ſenſible of the force of her own charms, did not yet deſpair of obtaining that dignity. She therefore appeared before the king with all the advantages which the richeſt ornaments, and

the moſt engaging air could beſtow. The king, on ſeeing her, was ſtruck with aſtoniſhment, and the higheſt love, which ſoon after filled his mind with the moſt furious deſire of being revenged on her huſband. He had, however, the art of concealing theſe paſſions from Athelwold, whom he took into a wood, under the pretence of hunting, and there ſtabbing him with his own hand, ſoon after was publickly married to Elfrida.

Edgar's court was admired for its hoſpitality and magnificence, and was generally filled with a concourſe of foreigners, who were charmed with his elegance and politeneſs. He extended his liberality to men of learning and genius; and his reign is remarkable for the extirpation of wolves in this kingdom. He took great pains in hunting, and purſuing thoſe ravenous animals, till finding that they had all taken ſhelter in the mountains and foreſts of Wales, he changed the tribute of money impoſed by Athelſtan, his predeceſſor, on the Welch princes, into an annual tribute of three hundred heads of wolves, which produced ſuch diligence in hunting them, as to extirpate the whole race. He died in 957, after a reign of ſixteen years, and in the thirty-third of his age. He was ſucceeded by his ſon Edward, whom he had by his firſt wife, the daugher of earl Ordmer.

EDWARD THE MARTYR.

Edgar was ſucceeded by his ſon Edward, whom he had by his firſt firſt wife, the daughter

ter of earl Ordmer, but this prince, who was only fifteen years old, at the death of his father, did not aſcend the throne without great oppoſition. His ſtep-mother, Elfrida, had a ſon named Ethelred, who was but ſeven years of age, and for whom ſhe endeavoured to obtain the crown: ſhe raiſed many objections againſt Edgar's marriage, with Edward's mother, and had a conſiderable party who ſeconded all her pretenſions. Edward's title was, however, ſupported by many advantages. His father had appointed him his ſucceſſor in his will; and as he was approaching to man's eſtate, might ſoon be able to aſſume the reins of government; the principal nobility alſo dreading Elfrida's imperious temper, were averſe to her ſon's obtaining the crown, which would encreaſe her authority, and probably put her in poſſeſſion of the regency: moreover Dunſtan, who had the higheſt credit with the people, having already acquired a great aſcendant over Edward, had eſpouſed his cauſe; and to cut off all other pretenſions, reſolutely anointed and crowned the young king at Kingſton; after which the whole kingdom ſubmitted to him.

On the firſt news of Edgar's death, Alfere, duke of Mercia, expelled the new orders of monks from all the monaſteries within his juriſdiction; but the dukes of Eaſt-Anglia and of the Eaſt-Saxon's, protected them within their territories, and inſiſted upon the execution of the laws lately made in their favour. Several ſynods were ſummoned to ſettle this controverſy, which, according to the practice of thoſe

times, conſiſted of the eccleſiaſtical members, and the lay nobility; and in theſe aſſemblies the monks prevailed, by the dexterous art of forgeing miracles.

There paſſed nothing memorable during this reign, except the death of this young prince. He was poſſeſſed of the moſt amiable innocence of manners; and as his own intentions were always pure, he harboured not the leaſt ſuſpicion of others. Though his ſtep-mother had oppoſed his ſucceſſion, and raiſed a party in favour of her ſon, he always treated her with reſpect; and even on all occaſions expreſſed the moſt tender affection towards his brother. He was hunting one day in Dorſetſhire, and being led by the chace near Corfe Caſtle, where Elfrida reſided, he ſeized that opportunity of paying her a viſit, unattended by any of his retinue, and thus gave her an opportunity, for which ſhe had long wiſhed. Elfrida invited him very courteouſly to alight, but finding him in a hurry to be gone, inſiſted upon his drinking a cup of wine as he ſat on horſe-back; the young prince complied with her requeſt; but as he was holding the cup to his head, a ſervant of Elfrida's approaching him, gave him a ſtab in the back. The prince finding himſelf wounded, clapped ſpurs to his horſe; but ſoon becoming faint with loſs of blood, he fell from the ſaddle, his foot ſtuck in the ſtirrup, and he was dragged along by his unruly horſe till he expired. Being tracked by the blood by Elfrida's ſervants, they found the body terribly defaced by the ſtones, over which he had

had been dragged, and threw it into a well, where a few days after it was found, and privately interred by Edward's ſervants at Wareham.

This prince's youth and innocence, with his tragical death, filled the people with the utmoſt compaſſion, and they gave him the title of Martyr, though his murder had not the leaſt relation to any religious opinion. As for Elfrida, ſhe built monaſteries, and performed many penances, in order to atone for her guilt, but could never recover the good opinion of the people.

ETHELRED.

After Edward's being thus baſely murdered, Dunſtan is ſaid to have offered his intereſt to Edgitha, the natural daughter of Edgar, who was become abbeſs of the convent of Wilton; but conſcious of the defect in her own title, and terrified at her brother Edward's deplorable fate, ſhe refuſed to accept the offer, on which he crowned Ethelred, who was then only in the twelfth year of his age.

England had, for a conſiderable time, been free from the depredations of the Danes, which ſeems to have proceeded partly from the vigour and warlike ſpirit of the Engliſh princes, who kept the kingdom in a poſture of defence, both by ſea and land; and partly from the ſettlements the Danes obtained in Normandy. But the Engliſh had now reaſon to dread, that they would again viſit the iſland, as the reigning prince was a minor, and had never diſcovered the

the leaſt ſpark of that capacity and courage, which, on his attaining to man's eſtate, would be neceſſary to render him fit either to govern his own ſubjects, or to repel a formidable enemy.

However, before the Danes dared to attempt any important invaſion againſt England; they, by way of trial, landed in ſeven veſſels near Southampton, ravaged the country, and departed with impunity. Six years after, they made another attempt in the weſt with the ſame ſucceſs. This encouraged them to aſſemble a greater force, and to hope for more conſiderable advantages. In 991 they landed in Eſſex, and after having defeated and ſlain, at Malden, Brithnot duke of that county, who attacked them with a ſmall body of forces, they ſpread their devaſtations over the neighbouring provinces. Ethelred, in this extremity, inſtead of rouſing his people to defend their honour and property, followed the advice of his courtiers, and bribed the enemy to depart the kingdom with the ſum of ten thouſand pounds*. This diſgraceful expedient induced the Danes to appear the next year on the eaſtern coaſt, in hopes either of obtaining more money, or of ſubduing a people who had not the courage to repel them. But in this interval, the Engliſh had determined to aſſemble at London a fleet capable of giving battle to the enemy, tho' that judicious meaſure was rendered unſucceſsful by the treachery of Alfric, duke of Mercia, who had in 983 ſuc-

* The Engliſh pound in money then contained twelve ounces of ſilver.

ceeded

ceeded to Alfere, his father, in that extenſive command; but being deprived of it two years after, and baniſhed from England, he had been obliged to make uſe of all his art to reinſtate himſelf in his authority. Having experienced the power of his enemies, he now truſted to the influence he had obtained over his vaſſals, and to ſuch public calamities, as in every revolution would render his aſſiſtance neceſſary. The king's council had formed a plan for ſurrounding and deſtroying the Daniſh fleet in the harbour, on which he privately informed the enemy of their danger; and the night before the engagement deſerted to them with a ſquadron under his command. Ethelred, enraged at his perfidy, ſeized Alfgar his ſon, and cruelly ordered his eyes to be put out; yet, notwithſtanding Alfric's treachery, aud the rage he muſt feel at this cruelty to his ſon, the court had again the folly to entruſt him with the government of Mercia.

The invaders being now well acquainted with the defenceleſs ſtate of England, in 993 approached in a great body, under the command of Sweyn, king of Denmark, and Olave, king of Norway, and, ſailing up the Humber, ſpread their deſtructive ravages on all ſides. Banbury was deſtroyed, Lindeſey laid waſte, and the Northumbrians, tho' chiefly deſcended from the Danes, were obliged either to join the invaders, or to be plundered. A powerful army was raiſed to oppoſe the enemy; but in a general battle the Engliſh were abandoned by Frena, Frithegiſt, and Godwin, their three leaders,

all

all of them deſcended from the Danes, who gave their troops the example of a ſhameful flight.

Soon after, the Danes, encouraged by this ſucceſs, entered the Thames in 94 veſſels, and laid ſiege to London, which they threatened with deſtruction. But the citizens, being firmly united among themſelves, made a bold defence; and the beſiegers, after ſuffering great hardſhips, were fruſtrated in their attempt; when, to revenge themſelves, they ravaged Eſſex, Suſſex, and Hampſhire; and, having procured horſes there, ſpread their depredations through the more inland counties. Ethelred had now recourſe to the former expedient; and, ſending ambaſſadors to the two northern kings, promiſed them ſubſiſtence and tribute, on condition of their putting an end to their ravages, and their departing the kingdom ſoon after. Sweyn and Olave accepted the terms, took up their quarters at Southampton, and there received the ſum of ſixteen thouſand pounds. Olave even went to Andover, where Ethelred reſided, and receiving many rich preſents from the king, promiſed that he would never more invade England; and he afterwards kept his word. Tho' Sweyn was leſs ſcrupulous than the Norwegian prince, he was conſtrained, upon his departure, to leave the kingdom with his followers.

The miſeries of the Engliſh ſoon returned after this agreement; for, in 997, the Daniſh pirates appeared in the Severn; and, having ravaged Wales, Cornwall, and Devon, ſailed round

round to the ſouth coaſt, and entering the Tamar, compleated the devaſtation of thoſe two counties; then returning to Briſtol channel, they penetrated into the country by the Avon; and, ſpreading themſelves round that neighbourhood, carried fire and ſword into Dorſetſhire. The next year they changed the ſeat of war; and, having ravaged the Iſle of Wight, entered the Thames at Medway, and beſieged Rocheſter, where they defeated the Kentiſhmen in a pitched battle. This victory was followed by Kent's being made a ſcene of devaſtation, fire, and ſlaughter. Theſe dreadful miſeries occaſioned ſeveral councils to be held for the defence of the kingdom both by ſea and land; but Ethelred's weakneſs, the diviſions among the nobility, the treachery of ſome, and the cowardice of others, fruſtrated every meaſure: the fleets and armies either arrived too late to oppoſe the enemy, or were repulſed with diſhonour. The king, therefore, had recourſe to the ſame weak expedient, which he had already found by experience ſo prejudicial, and offered to purchaſe a peace with money. Theſe ravagers, continually riſing in their demands, now required the payment of twenty-four thouſand pounds, to which the Engliſh had the meanneſs and imprudence to ſubmit. Their departure procured the Engliſh another ſhort interval of repoſe, which they enjoyed without making any effectual preparations for a more vigorous defence on the next arrival of the enemy.

The Danes, beſides the gratification of their avarice, had now another motive for leaving the kingdom, they being invited over by their countrymen in Normandy, who had for a conſiderable time taken poſſeſſion of that country, and were now vigorouſly oppoſed by the arms of Robert, king of France. Ethelred was alſo deſirous of forming an alliance with the Danes in that duchy, and, being at this time a widower, paid his addreſſes to Emma, the ſiſter of Richard II. duke of Normandy; and, his ſuit being granted, ſhe came over to England in 1001, and was married to Ethelred. In all probability that weak prince might have received great advantage from this alliance, had he not defeated all the benefits of this match by the execution of a ſcheme at once the moſt execrable and impolitic.

The king, weak, fearful, and indolent, was influenced by the advice of his favourite counſellors, to make a general maſſacre of all the Danes in England, except thoſe poſſeſſed of Eaſt-Anglia and Northumberland, who were too numerous to be overcome by the few Engliſh reſiding in thoſe countries. The Danes having rendered themſelves odious to the Engliſh, the orders given on this dreadful occaſion were circulated with ſuch ſecrecy, that the miſerable victims never dreamed of the horrible vengeance that hung over their heads; for, on the feſtival of Saint Brice, on the thirteenth of November, 1002, which fell on a Sunday, the day on which the Danes uſually bathed themſelves, they were all butchered by the vindictive

Saxons

Saxons without diſtinction between innocence and guilt: they ſpared neither ſex nor age, and the ſlaughter was accompanied with circumſtances of the moſt ſavage cruelty. Edric, earl of Wilts, diſtinguiſhed himſelf in this bloody ſcene, by an action, that muſt render his memory for ever deteſtable. The peace with Sweyn, king of Denmark, had been principally effected by the mediation of Gunilda, that king's ſiſter, who had embraced the Chriſtian religion, and married Count Puling, an Engliſh nobleman; whence ſhe conſidered England as her native country, and voluntarily offered herſelf and family as hoſtages for her brother's punctual obſervance of the treaty. From that day ſhe lived under the eye of Edric, who, from the mere wantonneſs of cruelty, devoted this unfortunate princeſs to death, among the undiſtinguiſhed crouds of her countrymen. He commanded her huſband and children to be butchered in her preſence; after which ſhe herſelf was murdered by being transfixed with four lances. This unhappy princeſs foretold, in the agonies of her deſpair, that her murder would ſoon be avenged by the entire ruin of the Engliſh nation. Never was prophecy better fulfilled, and never did a barbarous policy prove more fatal to its authors.

Some of the Danes, inſtead of flying to the churches that were ſtained with blood, took refuge on board a veſſel, and, ſailing to Denmark, carried the dreadful news to Sweyn, who was juſtly tranſported with rage, and the next year appeared off the weſtern coaſt, threatening

to take full revenge for the ſlaughter of his ſiſter and countrymen. Exeter fell firſt into his hands, and the Danes ſpread their devaſtations over the country. The Engliſh, now ſenſible of what they muſt expect from their enraged enemy, aſſembled in greater numbers than uſual; but duke Alfric, who was entruſted with the command, feigning ſickneſs, refuſed to lead the army againſt the Danes, till it was diſpirited, and at laſt diſſipated. Alfric ſoon after died, and Edric, who was no leſs a traitor, ſucceeded him in the government of Mercia, and the command of the Engliſh army. A great famine now added to all the other miſeries of the inhabitants. The countries, laid waſte by the Danes, were reduced to the utmoſt deſolation, and the king at laſt, in 1007, ſubmitted to purchaſe a precarious and infamous peace by the payment of 30,000 l.

This interval was employed in making preparations againſt the return of the Danes, and a law was enacted, which obliged the proprietors of eight hydes of land to provide each a horſeman and a compleat ſuit of armour, and thoſe poſſeſſed of three hundred and ten hydes were to equip a ſhip for the defence of the coaſt; but, when this navy, which muſt have conſiſted of near eight hundred veſſels, was aſſembled, the factions and animoſities of the nobility prevented its ſucceſs. Edric had obliged his brother Brightric to bring an accuſation of treaſon againſt Wolfnoth, governor of Suſſex, the father of the famous Earl Godwin; on which that nobleman deſerted with twenty ſhips

to

to the Danes. Brightric purſued him with a fleet of eighty ſail; but his ſhips being ſhattered in a tempeſt, and ſtranded on the coaſt, were ſuddenly attacked by Wolfnoth, and all of them burnt and deſtroyed. The treachery of Edric fruſtrated every plan for future defence, and the Engliſh navy were at laſt diſperſed into their ſeveral harbours.

From this time we read of nothing but the ſacking and burning of towns, the devaſtations ſpread through the open country, the appearance of the enemy in every part of the kingdom, and their cruel diligence in diſcovering every ſpot that had not been ravaged by their former invaſion. A general conſternation was ſpread over the country, and mutual diffidence and diſſenſion every where prevailed. The governors of one province refuſed to march to the aſſiſtance of another; they were at laſt afraid of aſſembling their forces for their own defence; and general councils were ſummoned, but broke up without any reſolution being taken. At length the only expedient that could be found was to purchaſe from the Danes a new peace, by the payment of 48,000l. Yet this did not bring them the ſhort repoſe they expected. The Danes, paying no regard to their engagements, continued their devaſtations, and they even obliged the county of Kent alone to pay them 8000l. and murdered the archbiſhop of Canterbury for refuſing to countenance this proceeding. The Engliſh nobility now every where ſubmitted to the Daniſh monarch, and Ethelred, no leſs afraid of the treachery of his own ſubjects

than of the enemy, fled, in 1013, into Normandy, where he had before ſent Emma his queen, and Alfred and Edward their two ſons. Richard received his unhappy gueſts with a kindneſs that does honour to his character.

Scarce had the king been ſix weeks in Normandy, when he received the news of the death of Sweyn at Gainſborough. The Engliſh nobility and prelates, taking advantage of this event, invited Ethelred to return to England, intimating, that they hoped he had learned by experience to avoid all the errors, which had brought ſuch misfortunes on himſelf and his people. But, on his reſuming the government, he diſcovered the ſame incapacity, cowardice, indolence, and credulity, by which he had been ſo often fatally miſled. Notwithſtanding the repeated treaſons of Edric his ſon-in-law, he had ſuch influence, as to fill him with jealouſy againſt Sigefert and Morcar, two of the principal nobles of Mercia: Edric invited them to his houſe, where he cauſed them to be murdered; and Ethelred ſhared in the infamy of this action, by confiſcating their eſtates, and putting the widow of Sigefert into a convent. This lady was poſſeſſed of ſingular beauty and merit; and prince Edmond, the king's eldeſt ſon, paying her a viſit there, became in love with her, and, releaſing her from the convent, married her ſoon after, without his father's conſent.

In the mean time Canute, the ſon and ſucceſſor of Sweyn, became as terrible to the Engliſh, as his father had been. He put on ſhore at Sandwich all the Engliſh hoſtages, after having

having barbarouſly cut off their hands and noſes, and then ravaged the eaſtern coaſt with mercileſs fury. He was, however, obliged to return to Denmark; but ſoon after coming back, he ravaged the ſouthern coaſt of England, and carried his depredations into the counties of Wilts, Dorſet, and Somerſet; where an army was aſſembled againſt him, commanded by prince Edmond and duke Edric. The latter ſtill continuing his treachery, after ſtriving in vain to get the prince into his power, found means to diſperſe the army, and with forty veſſels, deſerted to Canute.

Edmond, however, aſſembling all the force of England, was ſoon in a condition to give the enemy battle; but the king had loſt all confidence in his ſubjects, and pretending ſickneſs, ſtayed at London. The army called aloud for their ſovereign to march at their head, and on his refuſal, were ſo diſcouraged, that thoſe vaſt preparations became ineffectual. Edmond being deprived of all regular ſupplies to maintain his ſoldiers, made ſome fruitleſs expeditions into the north, which had ſubmitted to Canute, and then came to London, where he reſolved to maintain the ſmall remains of Engliſh liberty to the laſt extremity; but he there found every thing in confuſion, by the death of the king; who, after an inglorious reign of thirty-five years, expired in 1016. He left two ſons by his firſt marriage, Edmond who ſucceeded him, and Edwy, who was afterwards murdered by the order of Canute. He had alſo two ſons by his ſecond

marriage, Alfred and Edward, whom queen Emma, upon Athelred's death, immediately conveyed into Normandy.

EDMOND IRONSIDE.

The citizens of London, and all the noblemen who were preſent, immediately proclaimed Edmond king, who had already given ſignal proofs of his courage and abilities, and had obtained the name of Ironſide, from his hardy valour. Amidſt the other misfortunes in which England was involved, treachery and diſaffection had crept in among the prelates and nobility; and to prevent the farther progreſs of theſe fatal evils, he inſtantly led his army into the field, and after meeting with ſome ſucceſs at Gillingham, prepared to decide the fate of his crown in one general engagement. He offered battle to the enemy, who were commanded by Canute and Edric, at Scoerſton, in Glouceſterſhire; and in the beginning of the day, fortune declared for him, but Edric having cut off the head of one Oſmer, whoſe face reſembled that of Edmond, fixed it on a ſpear, and carrying it in triumph, called out to the Engliſh to behold the head of their ſovereign. Edmond obſerved the conſternation of the troops, and though he took off his helmet, and ſhewed himſelf to them, he was obliged, with all his activity and valour, to leave the victory undecided.

The treacherous Edric now took a ſurer method to ruin the young king, by deſerting to him; and though Edmond was acquainted with

with his repeated perfidity, yet probably knowing no other of the chief nobility, in whom he could place more confidence, he gave him a conſiderable command in the army; but ſoon after a battle enſuing at Aſſington, in Eſſex, Edric fled in the beginning of the action, and occaſioned a total defeat of the Engliſh. However, the indefatigable Edmond aſſembling a new army at Glouceſter, was again able to diſpute the field: but the Engliſh and Daniſh nobility, obliged their kings to compromiſe the diſpute, and to agree to divide the kingdom between them. The ſouthern parts were left to Edmond, while Canute had the northern diviſion of Mercia, Eaſt-Anglia, and Northumberland, which he had entirely ſubdued. Edmond was murdered about a month after this treaty at Oxford, by two of his chamberlains, who were employed by Edric, and thus made way for Canute, the Dane, to obtain the poſſeſſion of the crown of England. This great event happened in the year 1017.

CANUTE.

After Edmond's death, Canute was ready to take advantage of the minority of Edwin and Edward, the two ſons of Edmond, but was deſirous of covering his injuſtice under plauſible pretences: before he ſeized the dominions of thoſe princes, he ſummoned a general aſſembly of the ſtates of the kingdom in order to fix the ſucceſſion; and after his emiſſaries had tutored ſome of the nobles in private,

private, claimed the ſucceſſion, by virtue of the treaty lately concluded, which he pretended to interpret in ſuch a manner as implied, that the ſurvivor ſhould inherit the dominions of the deceaſed, without any regard to the children of either. The ſubjects of the late Edmond dreading a civil war, and unwilling to injure the right of the young princes, inſinuated to Canute, that they would willingly conſent to his reigning over them, as guardian to Edmond's eldeſt ſon; but refuſing to accept the crown on ſuch terms, he openly demanded, in the aſſembly of thoſe who had been preſent at the treaty, whether any thing had been ſtipulated in favour of Edmond's children? Thoſe noblemen replied, that their names had not been mentioned on that occaſion, on which he interpreted this ſilence into a confirmation of his claim, and no perſon preſent had the honeſty or courage to oppoſe ſuch a palpable uſurpation; but all unanimouſly acknowledged his title, and he was crowned with great ſolemnity.

Canute was, however, jealous of the two princes, and knowing that it would render him extremely odious, ſhould he cauſe them to be diſpatched in England; he, under the pretence of ſending them to travel, committed them to the care of a truſty Dane, who had orders to carry them into Denmark: but the man, moved with pity for theſe innocent victims of a barbarous policy, inſtead of obeying the command, carried them into Sweden, where the king, being afraid of involving himſelf

himſelf in a quarrel with Canute, by protecting the young princes, ſent them to be educated in the court of Solomon, king of Hungary. Edwin, the eldeſt ſon, died, after being married to the king of Hungary's ſiſter; and Edward, the younger brother, being married to Agatha, the daughter of the emperor Henry II. the ſiſter-in-law of Solomon. She bore him Edgar Atheling, Margaret, afterwards queen of Scotland, and Chriſtina, who retired into a convent.

Though Canute had gratified his ambition, by obtaining the poſſeſſion of the Engliſh crown, he was obliged to beſtow on the principal nobility extenſive government. He created Yric earl, or duke of Northumberland; Thurkill, of Eaſt-Anglia and Edric, of Mercia; but afterwards expelled Thurkill and Yric from their governments, and baniſhed them; put to death thoſe of the nobility, on whoſe fidelity he could not rely, and whom he hated on account of their treachery to their native prince; and among the reſt, the villain Edric, who had the raſhneſs to tell him in public, that he had not been rewarded according to his ſervices; and in particular, made a merit of having taken away the life of Edmond, which had placed him on the throne. On which Canute cried, "Since thou haſt owned thy-"ſelf guilty of that execrable treaſon, thou "ſtandeſt ſelf-convicted, and ſhalt immediate-"ly ſuffer the puniſhment thou haſt deſerved, "by ſuch an atrocious crime." He then ordered

dered him to be beheaded on the ſpot, after which his body was thrown into the Thames.

Canute, in order to reward his Daniſh followers, was, in the beginning of his reign, obliged to load the people with heavy taxes; but having deprived the Engliſh of all their dangerous leaders, he reſolved, by the juſtice and impartiality of his adminiſtration, to reconcile them to the Daniſh yoke; and ſending back to Denmark all his followers whom he could ſafely ſpare, he reſtored the Saxon cuſtoms in a general aſſembly of the ſtates of the kingdom; and in the diſtribution of juſtice, made no diſtinction between the Danes and Engliſh.

In the mean time Richard, duke of Normandy, fitted out a great armament, in order to place Alfred and Edward, the younger ſons of Edmond, on the throne of their anceſtors; but his fleet being diſperſed by a ſtorm, Canute wiſely ſeized that opportunity to pay his addreſſes to queen Emma, that prince's ſiſter, and promiſed to leave the children he ſhould have by that marriage, in poſſeſſion of the crown of England. With this demand Richard complied, and Emma being ſent to England, was ſoon after married to Canute.

Canute having firmly eſtabliſhed his power in England, returned to Denmark to oppoſe the king of Sweden, taking with him a great body of the Engliſh, under the command of earl Godwin, who, on that occaſion, performed a ſervice, by which he gained the friendſhip of his ſovereign, and laid the foundation of the immenſe

immenſe fortune he afterwards acquired. Being ſtationed next the Swediſh camp, and obſerving a favourable opportunity, he attacked the enemy in the night, drove them from their trenches, threw them into diſorder, and purſuing his advantage, obtained a deciſive victory. The next morning Canute ſeeing the Engliſh camp entirely deſerted, thought thoſe diſaffected troops had gone over to the enemy, but was agreeably ſurprized to find that they were in purſuit of the Swedes, whom they had defeated, and was ſo pleaſed with his ſucceſs, that he beſtowed his daughter in marriage upon Godwin, and ever after had the greateſt regard for him.

In another voyage which Canute made to Denmark in 1028, he attacked Norway, and expelling Olaus, kept poſſeſſion of that kingdom. Having now by his conqueſts and his valour attained the utmoſt height of grandeur, he felt the unſatisfactory nature of all earthly enjoyments; and being ſatiated with proſperity, began to caſt his views towards another world. But inſtead of making ſome compenſation to thoſe he had injured, he built churches, endowed monaſteries, enriched the clergy, beſtowed revenues for the ſupport of chantries at Uſſington and other places, where he appointed prayers to be ſaid for the ſouls who had there fallen in battle, and even took a pilgrimage to Rome, where he reſided a conſiderable time.

As Canute was the greateſt monarch of his time, he being king of England, Denmark and

and Norway, he could not fail of meeting with adulation from his ſubjects. One day ſome of his flatterers, while he was walking on the ſea-ſhore, broke into a ſtrain of admiration at his grandeur, comparing his power to that of the Deity; upon which he ordered a chair to be ſet on the beach, while the tide was riſing, and ſitting down, commanded the ſea to retire; but being in a little time ſurrounded with water, he roſe, and turning to his courtiers, chided them for their profane flattering; and remarked, that every creature in the univerſe was feeble and impotent, and that power reſided in One Being alone, who could ſay to the ocean, "Thus far ſhalt thou go, and no farther;" and with his nod, could level the moſt towering piles of human pride and ambition.

After Canute's return from Rome, he ſummoned Malcolm, king of Scotland, to acknowledge himſelf a vaſſal for Cumberland, to the crown of England; but this that king refuſed, under pretence that he owed homage only to thoſe princes, who inherited that kingdom by right of blood. Canute was unable to bear this inſult; but appearing upon the frontiers with a formidable army, Malcolm agreed, that Duncan, his grandſon and heir, whom he put in poſſeſſion of Cumberland, ſhould make the required ſubmiſſions, and that the heirs of Scotland ſhould always acknowledge themſelves vaſſals to England for that province.

After this enterprize, Canute lived four years in peace, and then died at Shaftſbury, in the year 1035, leaving three ſons, Sweyn, Harold,

Harold, and Hardicanute, Sweyn, whom he had by his firſt marriage with Alfwen, daughter of the Earl of Hampſhire, was crowned in Norway; Harold, who was of the ſame marriage, was at that time in England; and Hardicanute, who was the ſon of Emma, was in poſſeſſion of Denmark.

HAROLD HAREFOOT.

Notwithſtanding Canute had ſtipulated with Richard, duke of Normandy, that his children by Emma ſhould ſucceed to the throne of England, he appointed Harold his ſucceſſor; and he being preſent, and favoured by the Danes, immediately got poſſeſſion of his father's treaſures. On the other hand, Hardicanute was preferred by the Engliſh for being the ſon of queen Emma, and born among them, they conſidered him as their countryman. He had alſo a right founded on the treaty with the duke of Normandy, and, beſides, his party was eſpouſed by earl Godwin, who had the greateſt power of any nobleman in the kingdom. A civil war now ſeemed inevitable; but, by the interpoſition of the nobility of both parties, the affair was compromiſed; and it was agreed, that Harold ſhould have London, and all the provinces north of the Thames, and Hardicanute all the country on the ſouth of that river; on which Emma fixed her reſidence at Wincheſter, and eſtabliſhed her authority over her ſon's ſhare of the partition, till that prince ſhould take poſſeſſion of it.

This prince was only diſtinguiſhed by his ſwiftneſs in running, whence he obtained the name of Harefoot, and the cruel method he took to ſecure the poſſeſſion of his brother's ſhare of the kingdom, is the only circumſtance mentioned of his reign.

The duke of Normandy dying in a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and his ſon, who ſucceeded him, being a minor, Alfred and Edward, the two Engliſh princes, no longer found any protection in that duchy, and gladly ſeized the opportunity of returning to their mother, who ſeemed to enjoy ſuch power and ſplendor at Wincheſter. But a melancholy change was now taking place; earl Godwin had been gained by Harold, who offered to marry his daughter; and, while this was a ſecret, they laid a plan for the deſtruction of thoſe princes. Harold, with many profeſſions of friendſhip, invited Alfred to London; but no ſooner had he reached Guilford, than he was attacked by the vaſſals of Godwin; ſix hundred of his train were cruelly murdered, and he himſelf, being taken priſoner, had his eyes put out; after which he was carried to the monaſtery of Ely, where he ſoon after died. This dreadful news reaching the ears of Edward and Emma, the former fled back into Normandy, and the latter into Flanders; while the monſter Harold, triumphing in his barbarous policy, met with no reſiſtance in his taking poſſeſſion of his brother's dominions. His triumph was, however, of ſhort duration; for, after a reign of four years, he died on the 14th of April, 1039, and

was

was ſucceeded by his brother Hardicanute, or Canute the Hardy.

HARDICANUTE.

Though this prince had been deprived of his ſhare in the diviſion of the kingdom, by his ſtaying ſo long in Denmark, he had not abandoned his pretenſions; and, before Harold's death, had reſolved to recover what he had loſt by force of arms. Under the pretence of his paying a viſit to Emma, his mother, in Flanders, he had prepared a fleet of ſixty ſail, in order to make a deſcent on England; but receiving intelligence of his brother's death, he ſailed immediately to London, where he was received in triumph, and crowned without the leaſt oppoſition.

The firſt ſtep he took on his thus obtaining the government, diſcovered a meanneſs and littleneſs of mind, that muſt have damped the hopes they might have entertained of his future conduct. Exaſperated at Harold for having deprived him of his ſhare in the kingdom, and for his cruel treatment of his brother, he, with the impotent deſire of revenge againſt the dead, cauſed his body to be dug up, and thrown into the Thames; and, on its being afterwards found by ſome fiſhermen, and buried at London, he again cauſed it to be dug up, and thrown into that river. It was, however, fiſhed up a ſecond time, and then interred with great ſecrecy.

Godwin, who was equally inſolent and ſervile, had ſubmitted to be his inſtrument in this fooliſh revenge againſt his brother's corpſe.

Knowing that he was univerſally believed to be concerned in the barbarity exerciſed on Alfred, he perhaps hoped, by this means, to juſtify himſelf from having any ſhare in the crimes committed by Harold. But prince Edward, being invited over by the king, no ſooner appeared, than he accuſed Godwin with being the murderer of Alfred, and demanded juſtice againſt him. To appeaſe the king, Godwin made him a preſent of a galley with a gilt ſtern, rowed by fourſcore men, each of whom wore on his arm a bracelet of gold that weighed ſixteen ounces, and they were all cloathed and armed with the utmoſt ſplendor. The king was ſo delighted with this preſent, that he laid aſide all thoughts of his brother's murder; and, on Godwin's ſwearing that he was innocent of that crime, acquitted him.

Though the people had received Hardicanute for their king with the greateſt joy, he ſoon loſt their affections. They were greatly offended at his renewing the impoſition of Danegelt, and exacting from the nation a great ſum of money to pay the fleet that brought him from Denmark. The diſcontents in many places ran very high, and at Worceſter the populace roſe, and ſlew two of the collectors. Hardicanute was ſo enraged at this oppoſition, that he ſwore he would be revenged of that city, and ordered Godwin duke of Weſſex, Siwart duke of Northumberland, and Leofric the duke of Mercia, rigorouſly to execute his menaces; and they were obliged to deliver up that city to be plundered by the ſoldiers, and to ſet it on fire; but they

they ſpared the lives of the inhabitants, whom they confined in a ſmall iſland of the Severn, till, by their interceſſion for them, they ſhould appeaſe the king, and obtain their pardon.

The government of this tyrant was happily of ſhort duration; for Hardicanute, who was remarkable for his intemperance both in eating and drinking, died two years after his acceſſion, by his gluttony at the nuptials of a Daniſh lord, which he had honoured with his preſence; and his ſudden death, which happened in the year 1041, gave not the leaſt concern to his ſubjects.

EDWARD THE CONFESSOR.

On the death of Hardicanute, the Engliſh obtained a favourable opportunity of ſhaking off the Daniſh yoke. Sweyn, king of Norway, the eldeſt ſon of Canute, was abſent; and the two laſt princes had died without iſſue; while prince Edward had the good fortune to be at court: and though the deſcendants of Edmond Ironſide were the true heirs of the Saxon family, their being in Hungary was eſteemed a ſufficient reaſon for their excluſion, as all delays might be dangerous. This concurrence of circumſtances in favour of Edward might have failed of its effect, had his ſucceſſion been oppoſed by Godwin, who might dread that, on his aſcending the throne, he would again call him to an account for his brother Alfred's murder. But their common friends interpoſed, and obliged them to lay aſide all jealouſy and rancour, and to concur in reſtoring

the liberty of their country. Godwin only required that Edward would, as a pledge of his reconciliation, marry his daughter Editha; and, having thus ſecured himſelf by this alliance, he ſummoned a general council of the nation at Gillingham, and took every meaſure to place Edward on the throne. The Engliſh were unanimous in their reſolutions, while the Danes were divided and diſpirited; and Edward was crowned with great demonſtrations of duty and affection.

Upon this ſignal and deciſive advantage the triumph of the Engliſh was at firſt attended with ſome inſults on the Danes; but the king, by his mildneſs, ſoon reconciled the latter to his government; and the diſtinction between the two nations gradually diſappeared. The Danes, who were in moſt of the provinces interſperſed with the Engliſh, ſpoke nearly the ſame language, and differed but little in their manners. While the domeſtic diſſenſions in Denmark prevented any powerful invaſion from thence.

Edward began his reign by reſuming all the grants of his immediate predeceſſors, an attempt commonly attended with the moſt dangerous conſequences; but the poverty of the crown convinced the nation that this was abſolutely neceſſary, and, as the lot fell chiefly on the Danes, the Engliſh were pleaſed to ſee them reduced to their original poverty. Hence Edward, notwithſtanding this dangerous ſtep, ſtill preſerved his popularity. His ſeverity towards the queen dowager, his mother, tho' it expoſed him to more cenſure, was not generally diſapproved.

proved. He accuſed her of neglecting him and his brother during their adverſe fortune; and obſerved, that the ſuperior qualities of Canute having made her indifferent to the memory of Ethelred, ſhe had preferred her children by that Dane, and always conſidered Hardicanute as her favourite. The ſame reaſons had probably made her unpopular in England; and the nation in general was not greatly diſpleaſed at ſeeing Edward treat her with ſuch unnatural barbarity as to ſtrip her of all her treaſures, and confine her during the remainder of her life in a monaſtery at Wincheſter. Mr. Hume obſerves, that he carried his rigour againſt her no farther, and that the ſtories of his accuſing her of being concerned in her ſon Alfred's murder; as well as that of her carrying on a criminal correſpondence with the biſhop of Wincheſter, and of her juſtifying herſelf by walking barefoot over nine red hot plough-ſhares without being hurt, were the inventions of the monkiſh hiſtorians, and were propagated and believed from the ſilly wonder of poſterity.

The Engliſh had indulged the flattering hopes that, by Edward's acceſſion, they ſhould for ever be delivered from the dominion of foreigners; but they ſoon found themſelves miſtaken. As the king had been educated in Normandy, he had contracted an intimacy with many of the natives, and an inclination to their manners. Hence the court of England became filled with Normans, who, obtaining the favour of Edward, and being more civilized than the Engliſh of that age, they ſoon rendered their language,

guage, cuſtoms, and laws, faſhionable. The people generally ſtudied the French tongue, and the courtiers imitated that nation in their dreſs, equipage, and entertainments: even the lawyers uſed that language in their deeds and papers; and tho' moſt of the civil and military employments were given to the natives, the eccleſiaſtical preferments frequently fell to the ſhare of the Normans, who, poſſeſſing Edward's confidence, had ſecretly a great influence in public affairs, and excited the jealouſy of the Engliſh, and of Godwin in particular, who often forgot the reſpect due to his prince; for, though the king had married Editha his daughter, Edward's diſlike of the father was now transferred to that lady, who poſſeſſed many amiable accompliſhments. It is even ſaid, that he abſtained from all commerce of love with her during her whole life; and ſuch was the abſurd admiration, which in thoſe ages was paid to inviolable chaſtity, that the monkiſh hiſtorians have highly celebrated his conduct in this particular, which greatly contributed to his obtaining the titles of Saint and Confeſſor.

The influence of the Normans in the affairs of government gave great diſguſt to Godwin and the reſt of the nobility; and it was not long before this animoſity broke into action. Euſtace, count of Boulogne, had paid a viſit to the king, and paſſing through Dover on his return, one of his train, who had been refuſed entrance into a lodging that had been aſſigned him, attempted to get in by force, and, in the conteſt,

conteſt, wounded the maſter of the houſe. This inſult the inhabitants revenged by the death of the ſtranger; on which the count and his train took arms, and murdered the man, who had been wounded, in his own houſe. A tumult enſued, in which near twenty perſons were killed on each ſide; and Euſtace, being overpowered by numbers, was obliged to eſcape from the fury of the populace by flight. This foreigner, whoſe ſervant had begun the fray, haſted to court, and loudly complained of the treatment he had met with; and the king, highly diſpleaſed, that a ſtranger of ſuch diſtinction, whom he had invited to his court, ſhould have felt, ſo ſenſibly, the inſolence and animoſity of his people, without enquiring farther into the affair, entered zealouſly into the quarrel, and ordered Godwin, in whoſe government Dover lay, to repair immediately thither, and to chaſtiſe the inhabitants with fire and ſword; but Godwin, refuſing to obey, obſerved, that the Engliſh were not uſed to be condemned unheard; that the guilty ought to have a legal trial, and be puniſhed by law; and that the reſiſtance they had made was in their own defence againſt an inſolent foreigner, who ought to be ſurrendered to juſtice, and ſuffer for the miſchief he had done. On which Edward threatened, that, if he perſiſted in his diſobedience, he would make him feel the effects of his reſentment.

Godwin now prepared for his own defence; and, under the pretence of repreſſing ſome diſorders on the borders of Wales, went thither, and

and aſſembled a great army. This reached the ears of Edward, who without ſuſpicion reſided at Glouceſter, deſtitute of any military force. In this extremity, the king applied to Siward duke of Northumberland, and Leofric duke of Mercia, whoſe jealouſy of Godwin's greatneſs, as well as their duty to the king, engaged them to haſten to him with ſuch of their followers as they could ſuddenly aſſemble. The kingdom now ſeemed to be on the brink of a civil war; but a negociation being ſet on foot, it was agreed, that the affairs in diſpute ſhould be determined before the ſtates of the kingdom at London.

Though the Engliſh had no great idea of Edward's vigour and capacity, they had an affection for him, on account of his being deſcended from a long race of their native kings, and had haſted from all quarters to defend him from the preſent danger. The king now marched to London, where he ſummoned a great council of the kingdom, to judge of the rebellion of Godwin and his ſons. Thoſe noblemen declared their willingneſs to ſtand their trials, provided they might receive hoſtages for their ſafety; but, this propoſal being rejected, they diſbanded their forces, and Godwin, with three of his ſons, fled to Baldwin, earl of Flanders, whilſt two other of his ſons took ſhelter in Ireland. The eſtates of the father and ſons were now confiſcated, and queen Editha was confined in a monaſtery at Warewel.

The earl of Flanders having permitted Godwin to purchaſe and hire ſhips within his harbours,

bours, he manned them with his followers, and putting to ſea in 1052, attempted to make a deſcent at Sandwich. The king, who had been informed of his preparations, had equipped a much more conſiderable fleet, but the earl made his retreat, before their appearance, into the Flemiſh harbours.

The appearance of ſecurity now induced the Engliſh court to diſband the ſeamen, which Godwin expected; and, keeping his men in readineſs, immediately put to ſea, and ſailed to the Iſle of Wight, where he was joined by his ſon Harold with a ſquadron which he brought from Ireland. Being now maſter of the ſea, he entered every harbour on the ſouthern coaſt, ſeized all the ſhips, and ſummoned his followers in thoſe counties, which had ſo long been under his government, to aſſiſt him in procuring juſtice to his country againſt the tyranny of foreigners. Being reinforced by great numbers from all quarters, he entered the Thames, and appeared before London; when, by the interpoſition of the Engliſh nobility, Edward was prevailed on to liſten to terms of accommodation, to which he the more readily conſented, as Godwin diſclaimed all intentions of offering violence to his ſovereign; and deſired only to juſtify himſelf by a fair and open trial. It was ſtipulated, that Godwin ſhould give hoſtages for his good behaviour, and that all the Normans ſhould be expelled the kingdom. To this laſt article the king conſented with great reluctance; and, as he was ſenſible that he had ſcarce power ſufficient to ſecure Godwin's hoſtages

tages in England, he ſent them to his kinſman, the young duke of Normandy.

Soon after this event Godwin died while ſitting at the king's table, and was ſucceeded in the government of Eſſex, Kent, Suſſex, and Weſſex, and in the office of ſteward of the king's houſhold, by his ſon Harold, who, by his modeſt and gentle demeanor, acquired the good-will of Edward, and ſo conducted the affairs of the kingdom, that he made the reign of a very weak prince moſt happy to the Engliſh: liberty and peace were maintained at home, and victory attended his arms on the borders of the kingdom *. Algar, the ſon of Leofric, duke of Mercia, and the brother-in-law of Harold, was inveſted with the government of Eaſt-Anglia; but, being accuſed of carrying on a treaſonable correſpondence with the Welſh, was by a ſentence of the ſtates baniſhed the kingdom. He retired into Ireland, where he raiſed a body of forces, with which he came into Wales, and was there joined by Griffith prince of that country; and, making an irruption into Herefordſhire, defeated Reoul de Mantes, governor of that county; but they were afterwards routed by Harold, who of his own accord aſſembled his vaſſals to check their progreſs. Upon this occaſion he acted with great generoſity, and employed his whole credit in procuring the pardon of Algar, who, being reſtored to his eſtate and honours, was ever after firmly attached to his brother-in-law's intereſt.

* Lord Lyttelton, vol. i. p. 5. 8vo.

Weak

Weak and timorous as Edward was, he was happy in having his dominions but little expoſed to the calamities of war. About this time Siward, duke of Northumberland, acquired honour to England by his ſucceſs in the only foreign enterprize undertaken in this reign. Duncan, king of Scotland, was a prince of a gentle diſpoſition, but wanted the abilities required for governing ſo turbulent a people, who were continually put in motion by the intrigues and animoſities of the great. Macbeth, a powerful nobleman, nearly allied to the crown, had murdered Duncan; chaſed Malcolm Kenmore, his ſon and heir, into England, and uſurped the crown. Siward, whoſe daughter was married to Duncan by Edward's orders, took upon himſelf the protection of this diſtreſſed family: he marched with an army into Scotland, where, having defeated and ſlain the tyrant Macbeth in battle, he placed Malcolm on the throne of his anceſtors. In the above action with Macbeth, he loſt his eldeſt ſon Oſbern, and was inconſolable till he heard that the wound was received in the breaſt, and that he had behaved with great gallantry.—There is another circumſtance related of Siward that diſcovers his martial diſpoſition. When he found his own death approaching, he ordered his ſervants to cloath him in a compleat ſuit of armour; and, ſitting upright on the couch with a ſpear in his hand, declared, that he would patiently wait for the fatal moment in that poſture, the only one worthy of a warrior.

Edward, being now worn out with infirmities, and advancing in the decline of life, began to turn his thoughts on appointing a ſucceſſor to the kingdom. His ridiculous continence had prevented his having any iſſue.—William, duke of Normandy, had paid him a viſit in England during the time of Godwin's baniſhment, and was received in a manner ſuitable to the great reputation he had acquired, and the obligations that prince owed to his family. On Godwin's return, and the expulſion of the Norman favourites, Robert, archbiſhop of Canterbury, who was himſelf a Norman, had before his departure perſuaded Edward to think of appointing William his ſucceſſor, and had received a commiſſion to inform that prince of Edward's intentions in his favour, and thus opened his mind to new ambitious hopes. But Edward, being weak and irreſolute, and afterwards finding that the Engliſh would more eaſily acquieſce in the reſtoration of the Saxon line, ſent into Hungary, to invite over his nephew Edward, his elder brother's ſon, the only remaining heir of that line, with a view of acknowledging him heir to the crown. Edward came, with his ſon Edgar Atheling, and his daughters Margaret and Chriſtina; but he dying a few days after his arrival, the inexperience and weak abilities of young Edgar, made him reſume his former intentions in favour of the duke of Normandy; or at leaſt remain in a ſtate of ſuſpence.

In the mean time Harold proceeded in a more open manner to encreaſe his popularity, and

and to prepare the way for his advancement to the throne on the firſt vacancy. But there was one obſtacle which he was deſirous firſt to remove. When earl Godwin was reſtored to his power and fortune, he gave hoſtages, as we have before obſerved, for his good behaviour; and among the reſt, a ſon and grandſon, whom Edward had ſent to the duke of Normandy. Though Harold had no thoughts of the duke's being his competitor, he was uneaſy at ſuch near relations being detained in a foreign country, and was afraid leſt William ſhould take part with Edgar, and retain them as a check to his ambition. He therefore repreſented to the king, his entire ſubmiſſion, and the ſteady duty he had conſtantly preſerved, which took away the neceſſity of detaining any longer thoſe hoſtages; and by theſe topics, obtained the king's conſent to releaſe them. For this purpoſe he ſet out with a numerous retinue for Normandy; but being driven by a tempeſt into the territory of Guy, count of Ponthieu, was detained there as a priſoner, and an exorbitant ſum was demanded for his ranſom. Harold upon this ſent to inform the duke of Normandy of his ſituation, and to let him know, that in his way to his court, in order to execute a commiſſion from the king of England, he was detained by the mercenary diſpoſition of the count of Ponthieu. William, thinking that this might turn out greatly to his own advantage, ſent a meſſenger to Guy, to demand the liberty of his priſoner, and that nobleman not daring to refuſe ſo great a prince, delivered

him into the hands of the Norman, who conducted him to Rouen. He was received by William with every demonſtration of friendſhip and reſpect; and after expreſſing his willingneſs to deliver up the hoſtages, he took an opportunity of communicating to him the great ſecret of his pretenſions to the crown of England, from the will which he had been aſſured Edward intended to make in his favour, and deſiring Harold's aſſiſtance in that deſign, made profeſſions of the utmoſt gratitude, in return for ſo great an obligation. Harold was greatly ſurprized; but being ſenſible that he ſhould never recover his own liberty, much leſs that of his brother and nephew, if he refuſed, he profeſſed his reſolution of ſupporting Edward's will, and the duke of Normandy's pretenſions. To bind him faſter to his intereſts, William offered him one of his daughters in marriage, and deſired him to ſwear that he would fulfil his promiſe. To render the oath the more obligatory, he employed an artifice well adapted to the ſuperſtition of the times, and ſecretly conveyed under the altar on which Harold was to ſwear, the relics of ſome of the moſt reverend martyrs. When Harold had taken the oath, he ſhewed him the relics, and admoniſhed him to obſerve, with the utmoſt reverence and exactneſs, an oath that had been ratified by ſo tremendous a ſanction. Harold was aſtoniſhed, but renewed the ſame profeſſions, and the duke of Normandy and he parted with all the marks of mutual confidence.

A leſs

A leſs ambitious man would have been deterred by this oath, from endeavouring to gain a crown for himſelf, which he had thus ſolemnly engaged to procure for another. But Harold no ſooner found himſelf at liberty, than his ambition ſuggeſted caſuiſtry ſufficient to juſtify, in his own opinion, the violation of an oath, extorted from him by fear; and which, if fulfilled, might ſubject his native country to a foreign power. He therefore continued to practiſe every art of popularity, and about this time fortune threw two incidents in his way, which enabled him to obtain the favour of the public in general.

The Welch had long been accuſtomed to ravage the weſtern borders of England; and after laying waſte the low countries, uſually retreated with their booty into their mountains, where they were ready to renew their depredations, by ſeizing the firſt favourable opportunity that offered. Griffith, the reigning prince, had diſtinguiſhed himſelf in ſuch a manner in thoſe incurſions, that his name became terrible to the Engliſh; and Harold perceived that nothing could be more acceptable to the public, than his ſuppreſſing ſo ſucceſsful an enemy. He therefore formed a plan of an expedition againſt Wales; and procuring ſome light armed foot to purſue the natives into their faſtneſſes, with ſome cavalry to ſcour the open country, and a ſquadron of ſhips to attack the ſea-coaſt, he employed all theſe forces at once againſt the Welch; and by allowing them no intermiſſion in his aſſaults, reduced them at laſt to ſuch diſ-

treſs, that, to prevent their total deſtruction, they ſacrificed their prince, by cutting off his head, and ſending it to Harold, after which they were contented to receive two Welch noblemen appointed by Edward, as their ſovereigns.

The other incident did Harold no leſs honour. Toſti, his brother, who had been created duke of Northumberland, had behaved with ſuch injuſtice and cruelty, that the inhabitants riſing in rebellion, chaſed him from the government. Morcar and Edwin, two brothers, who were the grandſons of duke Leofric, joined in the inſurrection; and the former being elected duke, advanced with an army to oppoſe Harold, who was commiſſioned by the king to reduce and chaſtiſe the Northumbrians. Morcar being well acquainted with the generous diſpoſition of Harold, before the armies came to action, endeavoured to juſtify his own conduct; and he repreſented to him, that Toſti had behaved in a manner ſo unworthy of his ſtation, that no one, not even a brother, could ſupport ſuch tyranny, without participating in ſome degree of his infamy; that the Northumbrians regarding the legal adminiſtration of juſtice, to which they had been accuſtomed, as their birth-right, were willing to ſubmit to the king, but required a governor, who would pay regard to their rights and privileges; that they had been taught by their anceſtors, that death was preferable to ſlavery, and were reſolved to periſh, rather than ſuffer the renewal of the indignities to which they had been ſo long expoſed,

poſed, and truſted that Harold would not, on reflection, defend in another, that violent conduct from which he himſelf had always kept at ſo great diſtance in his own government. This ſpirited remonſtrance was accompanied with ſuch a chain of facts, ſo well ſupported, that Harold abandoned his brother's cauſe, and returning to Edward, prevailed on him both to pardon the Northumbrians, and to confirm Morcar in the government. He even married that nobleman's ſiſter; and by his intereſt, procured Edwin, the younger brother, to be elected governor of Mercia; on which Toſti left the kingdom in a rage, and took ſhelter with earl Baldwin, his father-in-law, in Flanders.

Harold, by this marriage, broke all meaſures with the duke of Normandy, and William plainly perceived that he had no room to depend on the oaths and promiſes which he had extorted from him. Harold himſelf no longer thought it neceſſary to diſſemble. He had gained the affections of his countrymen, and almoſt all England was engaged in his intereſt. Now openly aſpiring to the ſucceſſion, he inſiſted, that ſince it was univerſally allowed to be neceſſary to ſet aſide the royal family, on account of the imbecility of Edgar, none was ſo capable of filling the throne as a nobleman of great power, of mature age, of long experience, of approved courage and ability; who being a native of the kingdom, would ſecure it againſt the dominion and tyranny of foreigners. Edward, broken with age and infirmities,

mities, ſeems to have continued irreſolute, with reſpect to ſecuring the ſucceſſion; and in this uncertainty died, on the fifth of January 1066, in the ſixty-fifth year of his age, and the twenty-fifth of his reign.

This prince was the laſt of the Saxon line that reigned in England, and the firſt that touched for the king's evil. The monks gave him the title of Saint and Confeſſor; and the opinion of his ſanctity procured belief among the people of his curing that diſorder with his touch. His ſucceſſors conſidered it as a part of their dignity, to uphold the ſame opinion. It was continued down till the beginning of this century, and the practice was firſt laid aſide by the preſent royal family, who obſerved, that all men of underſtanding turned it into ridicule, and that it no longer ſtruck even the populace with amazement.

Edward had a fine and noble perſon, but his mind was not at all anſwerable to it; for he was weak, irreſolute and indolent.—He ſeems to have been entirely void of all natural affection, and his treatment of his mother was entirely inexcuſable. He ſeems, indeed, to have been void both of all the tender ſenſations of filial love, and of the ſofter paſſions: his continence, ſo much extolled by monkiſh writers, appears to have been the effect of his conſtitutional frigidity, and it was no real honour to him, that after being many years married, he left his wife a virgin; more eſpecially as the happineſs of the nation ought to have rendered him deſirous of leaving an heir to the crown.

He

He was, indeed, moderate in all his appetites, and was equally free from pride and oſtentation. He was of a mild behaviour, punctual in the performance of his religious duties, and charitable to the poor. The eaſineſs of his diſpoſition, appears from ſome private incidents of his life, which frequently ſhew the heart more than thoſe great actions which are the effects of advice and deliberation; of which we ſhall give an inſtance. One day when he was lying ſtretched on a couch, a page, who little thought there was any body in the room, entered it, and finding an iron cheſt open, filled his pockets with the ſilver he found in it, and went away; but not ſatisfied with what he had ſtolen, had, ſoon after, recourſe to it again; when Edward, thinking him, perhaps, too unconſcionable, cried, very deliberately, "Boy, "you had better be ſatisfied with what you "have got; for if Hugolin, my chamberlain, "ſhould come, you will loſe the whole, and "be ſeverely whipped into the bargain."

The moſt commendable circumſtance of the government of this prince, was his attention to the adminiſtration of juſtice; and his cauſing to be compiled for that purpoſe, a body of laws collected from thoſe of Alfred, Ina, and Ethelbert *.

* Though this compilation was for a long time highly eſteemed, is now loſt; and, according to Spelman, the laws that paſs under this prince's name, were compoſed long after.

HAROLD,

HAROLD.

Harold had taken his meaſures ſo well before Edward's death, that he did not meet with the leaſt oppoſition in aſcending the throne. The citizens of London, with the biſhops and clergy, were his zealous partizans, and all the powerful nobility, were either connected with him by alliances or by friendſhip. Hence neither the title of Edgar Atheling, nor the claim of William duke of Normandy, were mentioned; the people appeared unanimous in their wiſhes, and he was crowned on the day after Edward's death, by Aldred, archbiſhop of York.

Harold had much dignity, gracefulneſs and ſtrength, in his perſon. He had a courage and reſolution which nothing could daunt. An eaſy flow of natural eloquence, animated by a lively agreeable wit and elevation of ſentiments, with popular manners. Beſides the luſtre he drew from his political and military talents, in which he had no equal among his own countrymen, his character was embelliſhed and rendered more amiable by a generous ſpirit, and a heart in which humanity tempered ambition. Upon the whole, he was worthy of the crown to which he aſpired. If we may believe ſome ancient hiſtorians, of no little authority, his election was grounded on the laſt will of king Edward, or at leaſt on his dying words; but even allowing their evidence in this point to be falſe, ſtill that election will remain good and valid. For his not being ſo named could not deſtroy

deſtroy the right of the nation to chuſe a king for themſelves, according to the maxims they had received from their anceſtors, eſpecially, at a time when they were alarmed with the danger of an invaſion from Normandy *.

Harold was no ſooner ſeated on the throne, than his brother Toſti, who had retired to Flanders, enraged at his ſucceſs, to which he conſidered himſelf as having fallen a victim, filled Baldwin's court with complaints of the injuſtice he had ſuffered; and engaged the intereſts of that family againſt his brother. He then endeavoured to form intrigues in England, by applying to ſome of the nobles, and even ſent perſons into Norway, in order to excite the free-booters of that kingdom to take advantage of the affairs in England, on his brother's uſurpation; and, to render the combination more formidable, went to Normandy to engage the duke to ſecond the invaſion of England.

The duke of Normandy was filled with rage on his hearing of Harold's acceſſion; but, to give the better colour to his pretenſions, ſent an embaſſy to England, to upbraid that prince with his breach of faith, and to ſummon him to reſign the poſſeſſion of the kingdom. Harold anſwered the Norman ambaſſadors, that the oath with which he was reproached had been extorted by the fear of violence, and on that account could never be conſidered as obligatory; that he had received no commiſſion either from the late king or from the ſtates of Eng-

* Lord Lyttelton's Hiſt. of Henry II. vol. i. p. 5, 6.

land,

land, who had the only right of diſpoſing of the crown, to offer it to the duke of Normandy; and therefore, if he, a private perſon, had even voluntarily ſworn to ſupport the duke's pretenſions, his oath would have been unlawful, and it would have been his duty to ſeize the firſt opportunity of breaking it: that he had obtained the crown by the beſt of all rights, the unanimous voice of the people, and ſhould be unworthy of it, did he not vigorouſly maintain thoſe national liberties of which they had made him the protector; and that, if the duke made any attempt againſt him by force of arms, he ſhould experience the power of an united nation, conducted by a prince, who, ſenſible of the obligations impoſed on him by the royal dignity, was reſolved, that the ſame moment ſhould put a period to his government and his life.

William, who had before formed a reſolution of making an attempt upon England, conſulted only his ambition and reſentment, overlooking the difficulties of attacking a great kingdom with ſuch an inferior force. He conſidered, that, ſince the acceſſion of Canute, England had enjoyed near fifty years a ſtate of tranquillity, and that it would require time for its generals to obtain experience, and its ſoldiers diſcipline; and he hoped, that the very circumſtance of his croſſing the ſea, and leaving himſelf no hopes of retreat, as it would aſtoniſh the enemy by the boldneſs of the enterprize, would inſpirit his ſoldiers by deſpair, and rouze them to make the moſt violent efforts to ſupport the reputation of the Norman arms.

For

For ſome time the Normans had been diſtinguiſhed by their valour, and had arrived to the higheſt pitch of military glory; and every one, who deſired to ſignalize himſelf by his addreſs in military exerciſes or his valour in action, had been ambitious of acquiring a reputation in the Norman army, and now greedily attended to the proſpects of glory and advantage, which he promiſed them on their joining in the expedition againſt England. The more difficulty there appeared in the attempt, the more it ſuited their romantic ſpirit. The fame of the intended invaſion ſpread abroad, and multitudes crouding to tender their ſervices, with that of their vaſſals and retainers, William found leſs difficulty in compleating his levies, than in chuſing the moſt veteran and experienced forces, and in rejecting the offers of thoſe who were impatient to acquire fame under ſo renowned a leader.

The emperor Henry IV. not only gave all his vaſſals permiſſion to embark in this expedition, but promiſed his protection to the duchy of Normandy during the prince's abſence; and thus enabled him to employ his whole force in the invaſion of England. But the moſt important ally, whom William gained by his negociations, was the pope. For, though William had not the leaſt ſhadow of right to ſucceed to the crown of England, he eaſily obtained the ſanction of the pope's approbation, which, in thoſe days, was able to ſupply all defects: this he gained by reſpectfully ſubmitting his cauſe to the judgment of Rome, which Harold not

doing, he was declared an uſurper by Alexander II. That ſee proceeding in this affair upon a political maxim, it has often followed, to give ſentence in favour of thoſe who apply to it, againſt thoſe who do not, without any regard to the merits of the caſe.

William having thus helped out a bad title, and hallowed an enterprize, very unjuſt in itſelf, by the papal benediction, reſolved to purſue it, notwithſtanding ſuch difficulties as none but a great and heroic ſpirit would have dared to encounter. He aſſembled a very conſiderable fleet, and ſelected an army of 60,000 men from the numerous ſupplies, which from every quarter ſolicited to be received into his ſervice.

While the duke was making theſe vaſt preparations, he encouraged Toſti, in concert with Harold Halfagar, king of Norway, to infeſt the coaſts of England. Toſti collected about ſixty veſſels in the ports of Flanders; and after committing ſome depredations on the ſouth and eaſt coaſts, ſailed to Northumberland, where he was joined by Halfagar, who came with three hundred ſail. The united fleets entered the Humber, and began to ravage the country on all ſides, when Morcar earl of Northumberland, and Edwin earl of Mercia, the king's brothers-in-law, having haſtily collected ſome forces, ventured to give them battle, but were defeated, and thoſe two noblemen unfortunately ſlain.

No ſooner was Harold informed of this defeat, than expreſſing the utmoſt ardour to ſhew himſelf worthy of the crown he had obtained, he haſted with an army to the protection

of

of his people, who had flocked from all quarters to join his ſtandard; and no ſooner had he reached the enemy at Standford, than he was in a condition to give them battle. The action was extremely bloody, the Norwegians were routed, Toſti and Haltagar were ſlain, and the Norwegian fleet fell into the hands of Harold, who generouſly gave prince Olave, Halfagar's ſon, his liberty, and allowed him to depart with twenty veſſels.

Harold had ſcarce time to rejoice for this victory, when he received the news, that the duke of Normandy was landed in the ſouth of England with a great army. A large fleet, which Harold had aſſembled, and which had cruized all ſummer off the Iſle of Wight, had been diſmiſſed on his receiving falſe intelligence, that William, diſcouraged by contrary winds and other accidents, had laid aſide his preparations. Hence the Norman fleet proceeded without interruption, and arrived at Pevenſey in Suſſex, where the army quietly diſembarked. The duke, as he leaped on ſhore, happened to ſtumble and fall, but had the preſence of mind to turn the omen to his advantage, by calling aloud, that he had taken poſſeſſion of the country.

Harold had loſt many of his braveſt officers and ſoldiers in the late action, and now haſted, by quick marches, to reach this new invader; but, though he was reinforced at London, and other places, with freſh troops, he found himſelf weakened by the deſertion of his old ſoldiers, who from fatigue ſecretly withdrew from

their colours. Gurth, his brother, a man of great bravery and conduct, beginning to be apprehenſive of the event, remonſtrated to the king, that it would be better policy to prolong the war. He urged, that it was for the intereſt of the duke of Normandy to bring matters to a ſpeedy deciſion, and put his whole fortune on the iſſue of a battle; but that the king of England, in his own country, beloved by his ſubjects, had more certain and leſs dangerous means of inſuring the victory: that the Norman troops, elevated with the higheſt hopes, and ſeeing no reſource in caſe they were defeated, would fight to the laſt extremity; but if they were allowed to languiſh for want of action, were harraſſed with ſmall ſkirmiſhes, diſtreſſed by the want of proviſions, and fatigued with the bad weather and deep roads of the approaching winter, they muſt fall an eaſy and bloodleſs prey: that, if he delayed coming to a general action, the Engliſh, ſenſible of the danger to which their properties and liberties were expoſed, would haſten to his aſſiſtance from all quarters, and would render his army invincible: that, at leaſt, if he thought it neceſſary to hazard a battle, he ought not to expoſe his own perſon, but preſerve, in caſe of accidents, ſome reſource to the liberty and independance of the kingdom; and that, as he had once the misfortune to be obliged to ſwear upon the holy relics to ſupport the duke of Normandy's pretenſions, the command of the army had better be entruſted to another, who, not being thus bound

bound by ſuch ſacred ties, might give the ſoldiers more confident hopes of victory.

Harold was unhappily deaf to all theſe remonſtrances, and advancing towards the Normans, who had fixed their quarters at Haſtings, was ſo confident of ſucceſs, that he ſent a meſſage to the duke, in which he promiſed him a ſum of money, if he would depart the kingdom without effuſion of blood: but his offer was rejected with diſdain, and William, in return, ſent to require him either to reſign the kingdom, to hold it of him in fealty, to ſubmit their cauſe to the arbitration of the pope, or to fight him in ſingle combat. To which Harold replied, that the God of battles would ſoon be the arbiter of all their differences.

The two armies were now encamped very near each other. The night before the battle, the Engliſh ſpent in jollity and riot; but the Normans, in acts of devotion; at break of day the duke himſelf heard maſs in public, and received the communion. While he was arming, he happened to place his breaſt-plate upſide down, which ſome about him conſidering as a bad omen, he turned it into a good one, by ſaying, with a ſmile, it only ſignified, that the ſtrength of his dukedom ſhould, on that day, be converted into the ſtrength of a kingdom. He hung about his neck the relics of ſaints, on which Harold had ſworn to aſſiſt him; and then gave orders for a conſecrated banner, which he had received from the pope, to be carried before the army. Having thus made uſe of all the help he could draw from

religion or ſuperſtition, to encourage his men, he aſſembled the moſt conſiderable of his commanders, and made them a ſpeech ſuitable to the occaſion. He obſerved, that the event they had long wiſhed for was approaching; that the whole fortune of the war depended on their ſwords; that never army had greater motives for exerting a reſolute courage, whether they conſidered the prize that would attend the victory, or the inevitable deſtruction that muſt follow their defeat; that if their martial and veteran bands could break the raw ſoldiers, who had raſhly dared to approach them, they might conquer a kingdom, and be juſtly entitled to its poſſeſſions, as the reward of their valour. But that if they remitted in the leaſt, their wonted courage, an enraged enemy would hang upon their rear, the ſea would meet them in their retreat, and an ignominious death be the certain puniſhment of their cowardice. That the perjured uſurper, forſaken of heaven for his crimes, anathematized by the pope, and conſcious of his own breach of faith, would be ſtruck with terror on their appearance, and dread the fate which he ſo juſtly deſerved. The duke then divided his army into three lines: the firſt conſiſted of light armed infantry; the ſecond was compoſed of his braveſt battalions, heavy armed, and ranged in cloſe order: the third was formed of the cavalry, at whoſe head he placed himſelf; and theſe were ſo diſpoſed, that they ſtretched beyond the infantry, and flanked each wing of the army.

Harold

Harold performed all the offices of a ſkilful commander, in the diſpoſition of his forces, and the choice of the ground. Being greatly inferior in numbers, and not having a cavalry able to engage with that of the enemy, which made five parts in ſix of their army, he took poſt on a hill, and commanding all his horſemen to diſmount, formed his whole army into one deep phalanx of heavy-armed foot. The deſcent of the ground was ſteep towards the enemy; but the top was level, and wide enough to contain all his men in the cloſe and compact order in which he placed them, with their ſhields ſo joined together, as not to have any opening between them. Behind the phalanx were woods, through which they had marched to that poſt, and which defended their rear. They were all armed with Daniſh battle-axes, and had alſo javelins, or darts: but in this fight did not make uſe either of long or croſs bows; but both theſe were employed with great ſkill by the Normans.

The Kentiſh men formed the van, a poſt they always claimed as their due: the Londoners guarded the ſtandard, and the king, accompanied by his brothers Gurth and Leofwin, placed himſelf at the head of the infantry, and expreſſed his reſolution to conquer or die. William giving the ſignal of battle, his whole army moved at once, and ſinging the ſong of Roland, the famous peer of Charlemagne, advanced in regular order with great alacrity. Their firſt attack was deſperate, but the Engliſh received them with equal valour; and after a furi-

a furious combat, which laſted a conſiderable time, the Normans, overcome by the difficulty of the ground, and hard preſſed by the enemy, began to fly, and a rumour being ſpread through the line, that William was ſlain, his whole army fell into diſorder; but as ſoon as he knew the cauſe, he took off his helmet, and riding among them bare-headed, by his preſence and words diſpelled their fears. When they had recovered their ranks, he commanded them to ſurround ſome thouſands of Engliſh, whom the flight of his left wing had drawn to ſome diſtance from their phalanx. Theſe were all cut in pieces; and the duke having rallied thoſe who had fled, led them back to aſſault the main body of the enemy, which remained on the hill, commanding his archers, who were placed behind the wings to ſhoot their arrows high up into the air, that they might fall perpendicular upon the heads of the Engliſh; and at the ſame time the Norman horſe preſſing forwards, aſſaulted their front with great fury: yet ſuch was the impenetrable firmneſs of the order in which they were drawn up, that all attempts to break them failed, till the duke, obſerving the diſcouragement of his forces, had recourſe to a ſtratagem, which what had happened before might naturally ſuggeſt. He ordered his troops to make a haſty retreat, to allure them from their ground. This artifice ſucceeded: for many of the Engliſh, heated by the action, and ſanguine in their hopes, purſued them with precipitation into the plain, where the Normans ſuddenly turning, and ſurrounding

rounding theſe diſordered bands with their cavalry, killed them all to a man. The duke again tried the ſame ſtratagem with the ſame ſucceſs. If this, ſays the lord Lyttelton, be not a miſtake, we might conclude from it, that Harold was very incautious, to be drawn into the ſame ſnare a ſecond time, or rather a third (for though the flight of the enemy was not a feigned one, yet the purſuit had been equally fatal to the Engliſh) but his remaining himſelf the whole time upon the ſummit of the hill, with his two brothers, makes it moſt probable, that he was aware of the danger, and would have prevented his ſoldiers being deceived by this feint, had it been in his power. His forces, which the enemy had before much outnumbered, were now extremely diminiſhed; yet the remainder of them kept their ranks unbroken, animated by the preſence and example of their king, who fought on foot the whole day, and ſlew many of the Normans with his own hand. Nor could the duke, with all the efforts he cauſed his troops to make, diſſolve their phalanx, ſo that the victory remained undecided from nine in the morning, till the cloſe of day, when Harold was killed by the random ſhot of an arrow, which not being ſhot, like the reſt, up into the air, but in a lower, and oblique direction, pierced the ball of his eye, and penetrated into his brain. The hearts of the Engliſh now ſunk: they began immediately to give way in ſeveral places: the Norman cavalry ruſhing in through the breaches of the phalanx, made a great ſlaughter of thoſe who

who ſtood within it: the brothers of Harold both fell, and the royal ſtandard was taken. After theſe loſſes, the whole army entirely routed and diſſipated, fled into the woods that lay behind them; the Normans purſued them; but even in their flight they did not loſe all their courage: for having got into a valley full of deep ditches, they bravely made a new ſtand. There had formerly been in that place a camp well known to them, but not to the enemy; and the intrenchments being covered with ſhrubs and buſhes, many of the Norman horſe fell head-long into them, while many others were killed by the hands of the Engliſh; among whom were ſome Norman barons of great note; and the earl of Boulogne was dangerouſly wounded, by a blow with a ſtone, while he was earneſtly entreating the duke to retire, and not hazard his perſon againſt deſperate men; but that intripid prince continued the combat till he had driven them out of this ſtrong ground, and compleated the victory.

Thus was the deciſive victory of Haſtings gained by William duke of Normandy, after a battle which was fought from morning till ſunſet. William had three horſes killed under him, and loſt near 15,000 men: the loſs of the Engliſh was ſtill more conſiderable. Harold's dead body was brought to William, who generouſly reſtored it to his mother. Before the Norman army left the field of battle, they gave thanks to heaven in the moſt ſolemn manner for their victory.

MISCEL-

A NORMAN.

From Speed.

W. Walker sculp.

Miscellaneous Observations.

The lord Lyttelton has given a remarkable paſſage from William of Malmſbury, upon the different characters of the Engliſh and Normans at this period. He ſays, that the Engliſh nobility cut their hair ſhort, and ſhaved their faces, except the upper lip; their garments were plain and ſuccinct, and they wore no other ornaments but heavy bracelets of gold on their arms, and painted figures, that were burnt into the ſkin on ſome parts of their bodies. Their houſes were ſmall and mean; and they were univerſally addicted to drunkenneſs, continuing over their cups whole days and nights, keeping open houſe, and ſpending all the income of their eſtates in riotous feaſts, in which they ate and drank to exceſs, without any elegant or magnificent luxury.

The Normans, on the contrary, affected great finery and pomp in their cloaths; and were delicate in their food, but without any exceſs. They ſpent little in houſe-keeping, but were very expenſive and magnificent in their buildings, making them their chief pride, and introducing into this iſland a new and better mode of architecture. Nor did they only diſplay this magnificence in their own private houſes, but embelliſhed the whole kingdom with more ſplendid and elegant churches and convents than thoſe of the Engliſh.

Tilts and tournaments were introduced into England by king Edgar, and were juſtly ſtiled, by ſome of our ancient hiſtorians, military exerciſes,

erciſes, and preludes of war. They being of very great uſe in inſtructing the nobility in all the methods of fighting which prevailed at that time, but eſpecially in the dexterous management of their horſes and lances. They alſo kept up a martial diſpoſition, and an eager emulation for military glory, in time of peace.

It has been much diſputed by ſeveral authors, whether the people of England had a ſhare in the legiſlative authority, or parliament of England, ſo early as the time of the Saxons; and among our late hiſtorians, the ingenious Mr. Hume endeavours to prove that they had not, while the excellent lord Lyttelton, ſeems to prove to a demonſtration that they had, from the preambles of laws, and other proceedings of thoſe national councils *. He obſerves, that the parliaments in thoſe early times, contained the firſt elements of thoſe we have now, but were only a rough draught, in which regularity and decorum were wanting: for the property of the commons was ſo unequal to that of the nobles, that, in reality, the ſcale of the people was not weighty enough to make a proper counterpoiſe to either of the other two.

* See that nobleman's hiſtory of king Henry II. 8vo. vol. 3. 224—234, 372—450.

THE

WILLIAM I.

THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

BOOK II.

From the Acceſſion of WILLIAM I. to the Death of King JOHN.

CHAP. I.

WILLIAM I.

The Conſequences of the Battle of Haſtings. William aſcends the Throne. After ſettling the Government, he returns to Normandy. Diſcontents and Inſurrections of the Engliſh. Rigours of the Norman Government, and new Inſurrections. The horrid Deſolations in the North of England, and in forming the New Foreſt in Hampſhire. Inſurrection of the Norman Barons. Revolt of Prince Robert. England ſurveyed. A War with France. William's Death and Character.

CONSTERNATION and terror ſeized the Engliſh, on their receiving the news of the unfortunate battle of Haſtings; of the death

of Harold, and of ſeveral of the principal nobility, with the entire defeat and diſperſion of the army. But though this loſs was conſiderable, it might have been repaired in a great kingdom, where there were many powerful noblemen in every province, who might have aſſembled their followers, obliged William to divide his army, and waſted it in a variety of actions and ſkirmiſhes; and thus this kingdom had formerly reſiſted its invaders the Romans, Saxons, and Danes. And this would now have been the caſe, could they have agreed under whoſe ſtandard they ſhould have reſorted. The Engliſh are ſaid to have had at that time ſeven hundred ſhips of war cruizing along the coaſt between Pedenſey and Haſtings, and were maſters of the ſea, while the duke's navy was ſhut up in thoſe harbours. Winter was approaching, and the Normans had no magazines; conſequently they would have found it difficult to obtain ſubſiſtence in an enemy's country. Harold's army had been chiefly compoſed of mercenary ſoldiers; the provincial militia was almoſt entire, and nothing was wanting but a leader able to revive the ſpirits of the people. This might poſſibly have been done by Edwin or by Morcar, who, as ſoon as they heard of Harold's death, aſpired to the crown; but finding the nobility more inclined to elect Edgar Atheling, they retired from London, where they then were, and went into Northumberland, propoſing to act there as future events ſhould direct. But though Edgar was proclaimed king, the terror of the late defeat

ſeat rendered every reſolution propoſed haſty, fluctuating and variable.

After this victory, William, to prevent his enemies having time to recover from their conſternation, took Romney, and puniſhed the inhabitants for their treatment of ſome Norman ſeamen and ſoldiers, who had put in there, and then made himſelf maſter of Dover, where the garriſon, though numerous and well provided, immediately capitulated; after which he ſtrengthened it with new fortifications. This detained him eight days, during which a diſſentery deſtroyed many of his ſoldiers, and a greater number was left ſick at his departure from thence, on his march towards London. Not far from Dover, he was met by the principal inhabitants of Kent, who ſwore fealty to him, and gave him hoſtages. On his approaching London, he was ſeized with a violent fit of ſickneſs; but fearing, that where he was his army might be ill ſupplied with proviſions, and that any ſtop might hurt his affairs, he went on. A vaſt number of ſoldiers had repaired to London, after the battle of Haſtings, from all parts of England, and might have long defended it, and given time for the reſt of their countrymen to arm and recover their ſpirits; but ſuch was the impreſſion made upon them by the king's death, and the defeat of his army, that a very numerous body of them which had ſallied out from the ſuburbs, to attack an advanced party of 500 Norman horſe, was repulſed with great loſs, and all

the buildings on that ſide of the river were burnt.

After this action, the duke, finding no enemy to oppoſe him, proceeded along the ſouthern bank of the Thames as high as to Wallingford, and, then paſſing it, turned eaſtward in order to attack London. Stigand, archbiſhop of Canterbury, being averſe to the Normans, and excommunicated by the pope, had concurred with the nobility in their deſire of placing Edgar Atheling on the throne, againſt the will of his brethren; but, ſeeing no longer any hope of ſupporting that election, he went and ſubmitted himſelf to William, which example was ſoon followed by all the temporal lords aſſociated with him; and when the duke came in ſight of London, the chief inhabitants of that city ſurrendered it to him, and gave him the hoſtages he required to ſecure their fidelity. Laſtly, Edgar himſelf, finding no reſources againſt the ill ſtate of his fortune, delivered up his perſon and kingdom to William. Thus ended the government of the Saxons in England, two hundred and thirty-ſeven years after the uniting of the heptarchy, and ſix hundred and ſeventeen after the landing of Hengiſt and Horſa, their firſt leaders.

William received Edgar with the appearance of great regard and affection; and was ſo far from founding his title to the crown on a ſuppoſed right of conqueſt, that he uſed his utmoſt endeavours to eſtabliſh the notion of his being heir to king Edward, from the appointment of that monarch. The Engliſh nobles and prelates,

ſates, who had reconciled themſelves to him, and the chief citizens of London, adopted this idea, and entreated him to be crowned without delay, which he at firſt ſeemed to decline, ſaying, that he deſired the tranquillity of the kingdom more than the crown. But afterwards, conſidering that, in conſequence of his being crowned king, all perſons would be more afraid of rebelling againſt him, and more eaſily cruſhed if they did, he was crowned in Weſtminſter-Abbey, on Chriſtmas-day of the year 1066, by Aldred, archbiſhop of York, in the preſence of the moſt conſiderable of the Engliſh and Norman nobility; when Aldred, in a ſhort ſpeech, aſked the former whether they agreed to accept of William as their king, and the biſhop of Coutance put the ſame queſtion to the latter; and both anſwered with acclamations, that they did. Before he aſcended the throne, he made a compact with his new ſubjects by his coronation oath, the ſame with that of the Saxon kings. Aldred then anointed him, and put the crown upon his head. There appeared nothing but joy in the countenances of the ſpectators; but in that very moment there burſt forth the ſtrongeſt ſymptoms of the jealouſy which prevailed between the two nations. The Norman ſoldiers, who were placed without, in order to guard the church, hearing the ſhouts within, fancied that the Engliſh were offering violence to the duke, and inſtantly aſſaulted the populace, and ſet fire to the neighbouring houſes. The alarm was conveyed to the nobility who ſurrounded the prince; when the Engliſh and

Normans, being filled with apprehenſions, ruſhed out to ſecure themſelves from the preſent danger; and William himſelf found ſome difficulty in appeaſing the tumult.

William began his reign with diſpenſing impartial juſtice, and even conferred great favours on the Engliſh, till ſome, who had not yet ſubmitted to his government, particularly Edwin and Morcar, earls of Mercia and Northumberland, who gave him the greateſt apprehenſions, came in. He alſo encouraged intermarriages between the Normans and the Engliſh, and ſeemed deſirous of making them one people. So that, though he had really no right to the crown when he firſt claimed it, he may be ſaid to have acquired one after Harold's death, from the conſent of the nation, given chearfully, and with marks of mutual kindneſs and affection between him and his ſubjects. He, indeed, ſoon after confiſcated the eſtates of all the Engliſh, who had fought againſt him at the battle of Haſtings; an act of injuſtice coloured with the ſpecious pretence of law; Harold's election being called uſurpation, and his adherents ſtiled rebels to William their ſovereign; which opinion, however groundleſs, was admitted by the Engliſh, that they might appear to be governed under the peaceable title of a lawful ſucceſſion, and not under one ſo deſtructive of all liberty as that of conqueſt.

William had obtained the poſſeſſion of Harold's treaſure, and receiving rich preſents from the opulent men in all parts of England, who were ſolicitous to gain the favour of their new ſovereign,

ſovereign, he diſtributed large ſums among his troops, and thus gave them hopes of obtaining at length thoſe more durable eſtabliſhments, which they had expected. As the eccleſiaſtics, both at home and abroad, had greatly forwarded his ſucceſs, he did not fail to expreſs to them his gratitude and devotion in the manner that was moſt acceptable. He was well diſpoſed to favour the Engliſh monks, and built a new monaſtery near Haſtings, called Battle-Abby, for the ſupport of monks to pray for his own ſoul, and for that of Harold. But, amidſt the confidence and friendſhip which he expreſſed for the Engliſh, he took care to place all real power in the hands of the Normans; for, though he confirmed the liberties and immunities of London and other cities, he diſarmed the inhabitants; and, building citadels in that capital, as well as in Wincheſter, Hereford, and thoſe cities beſt ſituated for commanding the kingdom, he quartered them with Norman ſoldiers, and left no where any power able to reſiſt him. He beſtowed the forfeited eſtates on the moſt powerful of his captains, and eſtabliſhed funds for the payment of his troops. Thus, while his civil adminiſtration had the appearance of his being a legal magiſtrate, his military inſtitutions reſembled thoſe of a tyrant.

Having thus ſoothed the minds of the Engliſh, and rendered it difficult for them to rebel, by a mixture of lenity and ſeverity, he reſolved to reviſit his native country, in order to enjoy the triumph and congratulations of his ancient ſubjects. He left the adminiſtration in the hands

hands of his brother Odo, biſhop of Baieux, and William Fitz-Oſberne; and, leaving England in March, 1067, took with him all the conſiderable nobility of England, who, at the ſame time that they ſerved to grace his court by their preſence, and their magnificent retinues, were really hoſtages for the fidelity of the nation. Among theſe were Edgar Atheling, Stigand the primate, the earls Edwin and Morcar, Waltheof, the ſon of the brave earl Siward, with others diſtinguiſhed for the greatneſs of their fortunes and families, or for their eccleſiaſtical and civil dignities. His Engliſh courtiers, willing to ingratiate themſelves with their new ſovereign, outvied each other in their equipages and entertainments; and made a diſplay of riches, which filled the foreigners with aſtoniſhment. A Norman hiſtorian, who was preſent, ſpeaks with admiration of the beauty of their perſons, the ſize and workmanſhip of their ſilver plate, and the coſtlineſs of their embroideries. But, notwithſtanding every thing had the appearance of joy and feſtivity, the Engliſh nobles derived little ſatisfaction from thoſe entertainments, to which their oſtentatious conqueror ſeemed to lead them in triumph.

But, during the abſence of the king, diſcontents and complaints multiplied every where in England; ſeveral conſpiracies were formed againſt the government; hoſtilities were, in many places, already begun; and every thing ſeemed to threaten as rapid a revolution as that which had placed William on the throne. The inhabitants of Kent, who had firſt ſubmitted to

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the Norman yoke, were the firſt who attempted to throw it off: in confederacy with Euſtace, count of Boulogne, who had been diſguſted by the Normans, they made an unſucceſsful attempt againſt Dover. Edric the Foreſter, whoſe poſſeſſions lay on the banks of the Severn, exaſperated by the depredations made by ſome Norman captains in his neighbourhood, formed an alliance with Blethyn and Rowallen, two Welſh princes, and, with their aſſiſtance, ſtrove to repel force by force. Theſe open hoſtilities were indeed inconſiderable; but the Engliſh becoming ſenſible, tho' too late, of their defenceleſs condition, their diſaffection was general, as they began already to experience thoſe inſults and injuries which a nation ought always to expect, when it allows itſelf to be reduced to ſuch a deſpicable ſituation. It is even ſaid, that a ſecret conſpiracy was entered into, to perpetrate, in one day, a general aſſaſſination of the Normans, like that which had formerly been executed upon the Danes: and ſo general was the diſaffection, that the vaſſals of earl Coxo, having deſired him to head them in an inſurrection, and finding him reſolved to maintain his fidelity to William, ſlew him as a traitor to his country.

William was no ſooner informed of theſe dangerous commotions, than he haſted back to England, and ſoon diſconcerted all the ſchemes of the conſpirators. Thoſe, who had been moſt violent in their mutiny, either fled or concealed themſelves, and the confiſcation of their eſtates enabled the king farther to gratify the

the rapacity of his Norman captains. He now began to conſider his Engliſh ſubjects as inveterate and irreclaimable enemies, and reſolved to ſeize their poſſeſſions, and to reduce them to the moſt abject ſlavery. He had, however, the art for ſome time to preſerve ſome appearance of juſtice, and ordered all the Engliſh, who had been unjuſtly expelled by the Normans during his abſence, to be reſtored to their eſtates, but at the ſame time impoſed the tax of Danegelt on the people, which had always been extremely odious to the nation, and had been aboliſhed by Edward the Confeſſor.

The inſurrections of the people ſtill continued to break out in ſuch a manner, as could give them no rational hope of ſucceſs. The next year the inhabitants of Exeter, inſtigated by the murder of their late king Harold, refuſed to admit a Norman garriſon, and, taking arms, were joined by the inhabitants of Devonſhire and Cornwall. William haſtened with his forces to chaſtiſe them for this revolt; and, on his approach, the wiſer and more conſiderable of the citizens, ſenſible of the unequal conteſt, prevailed on the people to ſubmit, and to deliver hoſtages for their obedience. This agreement was broken by a ſudden mutiny of the populace, on which William, appearing before the walls, ordered the eyes of one of the hoſtages to be put out, as an earneſt of what the rebels were to expect, if they perſiſted in their revolt. The inhabitants, ſeized with terror, ſurrendered at diſcretion, threw themſelves at the king's feet, and ſupplicated for mercy. William was prevailed

vailed on to pardon the rebels, and even ſet guards on all the gates, in order to prevent the rapacity and inſolence of his ſoldiers. The malecontents of Cornwall imitated the example of Exeter, and met with the ſame treatment; and the king, after building a citadel in that city, returned to Wincheſter, where his army was diſperſed into their quarters.

While he was in this laſt city, he was joined by his wife Matilda, who now firſt viſited England, and was ſolemnly crowned by archbiſhop Aldred. She ſoon after bore him a ſon, whom he named Henry. His three other ſons Robert, Richard, and William, ſtill reſided in Normandy.

While the king appeared thus fortunate in public and domeſtic life, the inſolence of victorious maſters diſperſed through the kingdom, appeared intolerable to the natives, who frequently ſet upon the Normans when they found them aſſembled in ſmall bodies. At the ſame time was formed a general conſpiracy in the north. Edwin and Morcar appeared at the head of this rebellion; and, before they took arms, contracted for foreign ſuccours from their nephew Blethyn, prince of North-Wales, Malcolm, king of Scotland, and Sweyn, king of Denmark. William, in order to ſecure Edwin in his intereſt, had, on his acceſſion, promiſed him his daughter in marriage, and afterwards gave him an abſolute denial: and this diſappointment, added to many other reaſons of diſguſt, induced that nobleman and his brother to concur with their enraged countrymen, and to make

make one general effort for the recovery of their ancient liberties. William, knowing the importance of expedition in quelling an insurrection supported by such powerful leaders, advanced by long marches to the north, and, in his way, gave orders to fortify the castles of Warwick and Nottingham, and reached York before the rebels were able to oppose him, they not being joined by any of the foreign succours they expected, except a small reinforcement from Wales. The two earls then found, that they had no other means of safety but throwing themselves upon William's mercy; and Archil, a powerful nobleman in those parts, imitated their example: on which the people, being thus deserted by their leaders, were unable to make any farther resistance. William religiously observed the terms he granted them, and allowed them to keep possession of their estates, but extended the rigours of his confiscations over their followers, and gave away their lands to his foreign adventurers. These being planted throughout the whole country, left Edwin and Morcar, whom he pretended to spare, destitute of all support, and ready to fall whenever he should command their ruin.

The English became now sensible that, instead of having a sovereign who would govern them by their laws, they had tamely surrendered themselves to a tyrant. The successive destruction of so many families made it evident, that the king intended to rely entirely on the support and affection of his foreigners; and they foresaw new forfeitures, attainders, and acts

acts of violence, as the neceſſary conſequence of his deſtructive plan of adminiſtration, and that the foreigners, whom rigorous diſcipline could have but ill reſtrained, were encouraged in their inſolence and tyranny. Senſible of this diſmal ſituation, many of the Engliſh fled into foreign countries, in order to paſs their lives abroad, free from oppreſſion, or to return on a proper opportunity to aſſiſt their friends in recovering their liberty. Edgar himſelf, dreading the inſidious careſſes of William, eſcaped with Coſpatric, a powerful Northumbrian, into Scotland, taking with him his two ſiſters, Margaret and Chriſtina. King Malcolm gave them a favourable reception, and ſoon after married Margaret the eldeſt ſiſter; and, as he gave great countenance to all the Engliſh exiles, many of them ſettled there.

Even the foreigners, finding themſelves on all hands ſurrounded by enraged enemies, who menaced them with the bloody effects of the public reſentment, began to wiſh for the tranquillity of their native country. Humphrey de Teliol and Hugh de Grentmeſnil, though entruſted with great commands, deſired to be diſmiſſed the ſervice, and ſome others imitated their example: a deſertion which the king highly reſented, and puniſhed by the confiſcation of all their poſſeſſions in England. But his bounty to his followers allured many new adventurers into his ſervice; and the diſſatisfaction and rage of the Engliſh only ſerved to excite the attention of their enemies, and to keep them in readineſs to ſuppreſs every domeſtic

rebellion or foreign invaſion on its firſt appearance.

The Normans had ſoon an opportunity of exerting their valour and military conduct. Godwin, Edmond, and Magnus, Harold's three ſons, had, immediately after the defeat at Haſtings, retired to Ireland, where, meeting with a kind reception from Dermot and other princes of that iſland, they projected an invaſion of England, and hoped that all the exiles from Denmark, Scotland, and Wales, aſſiſted by forces from thoſe countries, would at once commence hoſtilities, and give the Engliſh an opportunity of joining them. They landed in Devonſhire in 1069, but found Brian, ſon of the count of Britanny, ready to oppoſe them, at the head of ſome foreign troops; and, being defeated in ſeveral actions, they were obliged to retreat to their ſhips, and to return with great loſs to Ireland. The efforts of the Normans were now directed to the north, where the moſt impatient of the Northumbrians had attacked Robert de Comyn, governor of Durham, and gaining the advantage over him, put him to death with ſeven hundred of his followers. This ſucceſs animated the inhabitants of York, who, riſing in arms, ſlew Robert Fitz-Richard their governor, and beſieged the caſtle. Soon after the Daniſh troops landed from three hundred veſſels. The command of theſe forces was given to Oſberne, brother to king Sweyn, and he was accompanied by Harold and Canute, two ſons of that monarch. Edgar Atheling marched from Scotland, bringing with him Coſpatric, Waltheof,

Waltheof, Siward, Bearne, Merleſwain, Adelin, and other leaders, who, by the hopes they gave of Scottiſh ſuccours, and from their authority in thoſe parts, eaſily perſuaded the warlike and diſcontented Northumbrians to join them. Mallet, the Norman governor of the caſtle of York, in order to provide for its defence, ſet fire to ſome houſes that were contiguous to it; when the flames ſpreading into the neighbouring ſtreets, reduced the whole city to aſhes; on which the enraged inhabitants, aſſiſted by the Danes, taking advantage of the confuſion, to attack the caſtle, took it by aſſault, and put to the ſword the whole garriſon, which conſiſted of three thouſand men.

This ſucceſs proved a ſignal to many other parts of England, to riſe in arms againſt the Normans. Hereward, an Eaſt-Anglian nobleman of diſtinguiſhed bravery, aſſembled his followers in the iſle of Ely, and made inroads into all the neighbouring country. The Engliſh, in the counties of Dorſet and Somerſet, aſſaulted Montacute, the Norman governor, while the inhabitants of Devonſhire and Cornwall inveſted Exeter, which, from the remembrance of William's clemency, ſtill remained faithful to him. Edric the Foreſter, aſſiſted by the Welch, laid ſiege to Shrewſbury, and made head againſt earl Brient and Fitz-Oſberne, who commanded in thoſe quarters. The Engliſh every where ſeemed reſolved to make one great effort in concert, for the recovery of their liberty, by expelling the Normans.

William, amidſt this ſcene of confuſion, was undiſmayed, and aſſembling his forces, animated them with the proſpect of new confiſcations and forfeitures; then marched againſt the rebels in the north, who appeared the moſt formidable, and whoſe defeat muſt fill all the other malecontents with terror. Before his approach, he tried to weaken the enemy, by detaching the Danes from them, and prevailed on Oſberne, by large preſents, and by offering him leave to plunder the ſea-coaſt, to retire into Denmark, without committing farther hoſtilities. Coſpatric deſpairing of ſucceſs, made his ſubmiſſions to the king, and paying a ſum of money to atone for his inſurrection, was received into favour, and even inveſted with the earldom of Northumberland. Waltheof, who had long defended York with great bravery, was allured by this appearance of clemency; and as the king knew how to eſteem valour even in an enemy, that nobleman had no reaſon to repent of his confidence. Even Edric, now compelled by neceſſity, ſubmitted to William, and received forgiveneſs, which was ſoon after followed by ſome degree of truſt and favour. As Malcolm came too late to ſupport his confederates, he was forced to retire, and Edgar Atheling, with his followers, ſought again a retreat in Scotland, while all the Engliſh rebels in other parts, except Hereward, who ſtill kept in his faſtneſſes, diſperſed, and left the Normans undiſputed maſters of the kingdom.

However,

However, William's ſeeming clemency towards the Engliſh leaders only proceeded from artifice, or from his eſteem of individuals; and he now ſcrupled no meaſures, however ſevere, that ſeemed proper to ſupport his plan of tyrannical adminiſtration. Senſible of the reſtleſs diſpoſition of the brave Northumbrians, he reſolved for ever to incapacitate them from giving him diſturbance, and in 1070, gave orders for laying entirely waſte that fertile country which, for the extent of ſixty miles, lies between the Humber and the Tees; many large and flouriſhing towns, beſides a great number of villages and fine country-ſeats were deſtroyed. The houſes were, by the mercileſs Normans, reduced to aſhes; the cattle ſeized and driven away; the inſtruments of huſbandry deſtroyed, and the inhabitants compelled either to ſeek for ſubſiſtence in the ſouth of Scotland; or if, from a reluctance to abandon the ancient place of their abode, they lingered in England, they periſhed miſerably in the woods with cold and hunger. The lives of a hundred thouſand perſons are ſaid to have been ſacrificed to this ſtroke of barbarous policy.

Among the other inſtances of William's cruelty, was the inhuman ſeverity of his foreſt laws. He ought to have known, that men are often more irritated by an ungracious reſtraint on their pleaſures, eſpecially thoſe which cuſtom has rendered habitual to them, than by greater oppreſſions: but this is a proof, that his paſſion for hunting over-powered his reaſon. He prohibited his ſubjects from hunting in any

of his foreſts: the killing of a deer or boar, or even a hare, was puniſhed with the loſs of the offender's eyes; and that at a time when the killing of a man might be atoned for, by paying a moderate fine. Not ſatisfied with thoſe large foreſts, which the former kings poſſeſſed in all parts of England, he reſolved to make a new foreſt near his palace at Wincheſter: and for that purpoſe, laid waſte a country of about thirty miles in extent, drove out all the inhabitants, and deſtroyed all their dwellings, not ſparing even the churches, and made the ſufferers no compenſation for the injury. One of the moſt horrid acts of wanton cruelty recorded in hiſtory. The lord Lyttelton, after mentioning this deſolation with that juſt mentioned on the north of the Humber, (where he ſays, the whole land remained uncultivated till the reign of king Henry II.) obſerves, that Attila himſelf did not more juſtly deſerve to be named *the ſcourge of God*, than this mercileſs Norman. Indeed, he adds, neither that Hun, nor any other deſtroyer of nations, ever made worſe devaſtations in an enemy's country, than he did in his own.

The people having now given William ſenſible proofs of their impotent rage, he reſolved to reduce all the natives of England to a condition that would render them no longer formidable. As the bulk of the landed proprietors had more or leſs been involved in the above inſurrections and conſpiracies, he confiſcated their eſtates, and either annexed them to the royal demeſnes, or conferred them with the moſt

moſt profuſe bounty, on the Normans and other foreigners. As his declared intention was to depreſs, or rather entirely extirpate the Engliſh gentry, ſcarce was the form of juſtice obſerved in theſe violent proceedings. Any ſuſpicion ſerved as the moſt undoubted proof of guilt againſt a people thus devoted to deſtruction. It was a ſufficient crime in an Engliſhman to be rich or noble, or powerful; and thus almoſt an entire revolution was produced in the landed property in the kingdom. The ancient and honourable families were reduced to beggary; the nobles themſelves were not only treated with ignominy and contempt, but had the mortification to ſee their caſtles and manors poſſeſſed by Normans of the meaneſt birth and loweſt ſtations, while they themſelves were excluded from every path that led to riches or preferment.

William, in order to retain for ever the military authority, introduced into England the feudal law, in the manner which he found it eſtabliſhed in France and Normandy. He divided all the lands of England, with few exceptions beſides the royal demeſne, into baronies, and theſe he conferred, with the reſervation of ſtated ſervices and payments, on the moſt conſiderable of his adventurers. Thoſe great barons, who held immediately of the crown, ſhared out a great part of their lands to other foreigners, who were denominated knights or vaſſals, and who paid their lord the ſame duty and ſubmiſſion in peace and war, which he himſelf owed to his ſovereign. The

whole

whole kingdom contained about ſeven hundred baronies, and 60215 knights-fees; and as none of the native Engliſh were admitted into the firſt rank, the few who retained their landed property, were glad to be received into the ſecond; and under the protection of ſome powerful Norman, to load themſelves and their poſterity with this grievous burden, for eſtates which they had received free from their anceſtors.

William alſo reduced the eccleſiaſtical revenues under the ſame feudel law; and though on his firſt invaſion he had courted the church, he now rendered it ſubject to ſervices which the clergy regarded as a grievous ſlavery, and entirely foreign to their profeſſion. The biſhops and abbots were obliged, when the king was at war, to furniſh a number of knights, or military tenants, proportioned to the extent of property, each ſee or abbey poſſeſſed; and in caſe of failure, were liable to the ſame penalties, as thoſe exacted from the laity. The pope and the eccleſiaſtics exclaimed againſt this tyranny, as they called it; but the king's authority was ſo well eſtabliſhed over the army, who held every thing from his bounty, that ſuperſtition itſelf, even in an age when it was moſt prevalent, was obliged to bend under his ſuperior influence.

Having ſome reaſon to dread the reſentment of the body of the clergy, who were ſtill natives, he expelled the Engliſh from all the conſiderable dignities, and advanced foreigners in their place. Among theſe was Stigand, archbiſhop

biſhop of Canterbury, with ſeveral other biſhops and abbots, who, on frivolous pretences, were degraded and thrown into priſon. Upon Stigand's depoſition, he promoted Lanfranc, a Milaneſe monk, celebrated for his learning and piety, to the vacant ſee. This prelate diſtinguiſhed himſelf by his zeal in promoting the intereſt of the papacy; and by introducing a number of innovations which became dangerous to ſome of William's ſucceſſors, and incommodious to moſt of them; but the king's arbitrary ſway and extenſive authority, kept him from feeling any immediate inconveniences from it. He held the church, as well as his lay-ſubjects, in great ſubjection; and would allow none, of whatever character, to diſpute his ſovereign will and pleaſure. He forbad his ſubjects acknowledging any one for pope, whom he himſelf had not previouſly received: he required, that all the eccleſiaſtical canons ſhould firſt be laid before him, and be ratified by his authority: even bulls or letters from Rome could not be legally produced, till they received the ſame ſanction; and none of his miniſters or barons, whatever offences they committed, could be liable to ſpiritual cenſures, till he had given his conſent. Theſe regulations kept united the civil and eccleſiaſtical powers, which the other principles he himſelf had introduced, had an immediate tendency to ſeparate.

In the mean time, the ſituation of the great earls Morcar and Edwin, became very diſagreeable. Though during the above general ſurre-

ſurrection of their countrymen, they had retained their allegiance, they had not gained the king's confidence, and were involved in that general contempt which the Normans entertained for the Engliſh. Senſible that they had entirely loſt their dignity, and could not hope to remain long in ſafety, they reſolved to ſhare the ſame fate with their countrymen. In 1071 Edwin retired to his eſtate in the north, in order to form an inſurrection; and Morcar took ſhelter in the iſle of Ely, with the brave Hereward, who, ſecured by the inacceſſible ſituation of the place, ſtill defended himſelf againſt the Normans. But this only ſerved to haſten the ruin of the few Engliſh who, during the paſt convulſions, had been able to preſerve their fortunes. William having ſurrounded the iſle of Ely, with flat-bottomed-boats, and made a cauſeway through the moraſſes two miles in length, obliged the rebels to ſurrender at diſcretion. Hereward alone forced his way ſword in hand through the enemy, and ſtill continued his hoſtilities by ſea againſt the Normans, till at laſt William, charmed with his bravery, received him into favour, and reſtored him to his eſtate. Earl Morcar, and Egelwin, biſhop of Durham, who had joined the malecontents, were caſt into priſon, and ſoon after the latter died in confinement. Edwin, attempting to eſcape into Scotland, was betrayed by ſome of his followers, and killed by a party of Normans, to the great affliction of the Engliſh; and even of William himſelf, who is ſaid to have paid a tribute of generous tears to the memory

memory of that gallant and beautiful youth. The king of Scotland, in hopes of obtaining advantage from theſe convulſions, had attacked the northern counties; but, on William's approach, retired; and, on the king's entering Scotland, was glad to conclude a peace, and to pay the uſual homage to the Engliſh crown. To compleat the king's proſperity, Edgar Atheling himſelf, deſpairing of ſucceſs, ſubmitted to him, and receiving a decent penſion for his ſubſiſtence, was permitted to live unmoleſted in England. But theſe inſtances of generoſity towards the leaders were, as uſual, diſgraced by William's rigour againſt the inferior rebels: for he had the cruelty to order the eyes of many of the priſoners, whom he had taken in the iſle of Ely, to be put out, and their hands cut off, and in that miſerable condition they were diſperſed as monuments of his ſeverity throughout the country.

William had obtained the dominion of the province of Maine in France, by the will of Hebert, the laſt count, ſome years before his invaſion of England; but the inhabitants being diſſatisfied with the Norman government, and inſtigated by Fulk, count of Anjou, who had ſome pretenſions to the ſucceſſion, roſe in rebellion in 1073, and expelled the magiſtrates whom the king had placed over them. He had now leiſure to puniſh this inſult on his authority; but, being unwilling to take his Norman forces from this iſland, he carried over a conſiderable army that was almoſt entirely compoſed of Engliſh; and joining them to ſome troops raiſed

raiſed in Normandy, entered the revolted province. The Engliſh, on this occaſion, were ambitious of diſtinguiſhing themſelves, and of retrieving that character of national valour, which their late eaſy ſubjection under the Norman yoke had ſomewhat degraded. The king's military conduct, ſeconded by thoſe brave troops, ſoon overcame all oppoſition. The inhabitants of Maine were obliged to ſubmit, and the count of Anjou relinquiſhed his pretenſions.

Mean while the government of England was greatly diſturbed by thoſe very foreigners who were the principal objects of his friendſhip and regard. The Norman barons, who had joined their duke in the conqueſt of England, were men of the moſt independent ſpirit; and, tho' they obeyed their leader in the field, would have regarded the richeſt acquiſitions with diſdain, had they been required, in return, to ſubmit in their civil government to the arbitrary will of any man. But William's imperious character, encouraged by his abſolute authority over the Engliſh, prompted him to ſtretch his authority over the Normans themſelves farther than they could eaſily bear. The diſcontents among thoſe haughty nobles were become general; and even Roger, earl of Hereford, ſon and heir of Fitz Oſberne, the king's chief favourite, was deeply infected with them. Intending to marry his ſiſter to Ralph de Guader, earl of Norfolk, he had thought it his duty to mention it to the king, and to aſk his conſent; but meeting with a refuſal, he proceeded to compleat the nuptials, and aſſembled all his friends,

friends, with thoſe of Guader, to attend the ſolemnity. The two earls, exaſperated at being denied their requeſt, and dreading the king's reſentment for their diſobedience, had prepared meaſures for a revolt; and during the feſtival, while the company were heated with wine, opened to them their deſigns, inveighing againſt William's arbitrary conduct; the tyranny he exerciſed over the Engliſh, whom they affected to pity; his imperious behaviour to his barons of the moſt noble birth, and his viſible intention of reducing both the victors and the vanquiſhed to the ſame ignominious ſubjection. The indignity of ſubmitting to a baſtard was not forgot, and the certainty of ſucceſs in a revolt, by the aſſiſtance of the Danes, and diſcontent of the Engliſh, was inſiſted on; and the whole company, animated by the ſame ſentiments, and warmed by the jollity of the feſtival, entered, by a ſolemn engagement, into the deſign of ſhaking off the royal authority. Even earl Waltheof, who was preſent, being heated with wine, expreſſed his approbation of the conſpiracy, and promiſed to join in it.

This was the laſt Engliſh nobleman, who, for ſome time paſt, had poſſeſſed any power or authority. After the capitulation at York, the conqueror had received him into favour; he had even married Judith, William's niece, and had been promoted to the earldoms of Northampton and Huntingdon. Coſpatric, earl of Northumberland, having retired into Scotland on ſome new diſguſt, Waltheof had been appointed his ſucceſſor in that important com-

mand, and appeared ſtill to poſſeſs the king's friendſhip and confidence. But, as he was a man of generous principles, and loved his country, it is probable, that the tyranny with which the Engliſh were governed lay heavy upon his mind, and deſtroyed all the ſatisfaction that aroſe from his own grandeur. When a proſpect, therefore, was opened of recovering their liberty, he haſtily embraced it, while the fumes of the liquor, and the ardour of the company, prevented his reflecting on the conſequences of that raſh attempt. But, when his cool judgment returned, he foreſaw the improbability of the conſpiracy's proving ſucceſsful againſt the eſtabliſhed power of William, or that, if it did, the ſlavery of the Engliſh would not be alleviated under a multitude of factious and ambitious foreign leaders, whoſe union and whoſe diſcord would be equally oppreſſive to the people. Agitated by theſe reflections, he opened his mind to his wife, of whoſe fidelity he entertained no ſuſpicion; but ſhe, having ſecretly fixed her affections on another, ſeized this opportunity of ruining her eaſy and credulous huſband, and conveyed intelligence of the conſpiracy to the king her uncle, aggravating every circumſtance which ſhe imagined would tend to enrage him againſt her huſband. In the mean time Waltheof, being ſtill dubious with reſpect to the part he ought to act, diſcovered the ſecret in confeſſion to Lanfranc, on whoſe probity and judgment he relied. The prelate told him, that he owed no fidelity to thoſe rebellious barons; that his firſt duty was to his ſovereign and benefactor,

benefactor, and the next to himself and family; and that, if he did not atone for his guilt, by revealing it, the temerity of the conspirators was so great, that they would afford some other person the means of acquiring the merit of a discovery. The earl, convinced by these arguments, went over to Normandy, where he was well received by the king, and thanked for his fidelity; but the account transmitted by his wife had sunk into William's mind, and destroyed all the merit of the discovery.

The conspirators no sooner heard of his departure, than they concluded that they were betrayed, and had recourse to arms before their schemes were ripe for execution, and even before the arrival of the Danes, in whom they placed their principal confidence. The earl of Hereford was repulsed by Walter de Lacy, who, in conjunction with the bishop of Worcester and the abbot of Evesham, raised some forces, and prevented the earl from passing the Severn, or advancing into the heart of the kingdom. The earl of Norfolk was defeated at Fagadun near Cambridge, by Odo the regent, assisted by William de Warrenne, and Richard de Bienfaite, the two justiciaries; and the prisoners taken in this battle had their right foot cut off as a punishment for their rebellion. The earl himself escaped to Norwich, and thence to Denmark, where the Danish fleet, after making an unsuccessful attempt upon the coast of England, soon after returned with intelligence, that all his confederates were suppressed, and either killed, banished, or taken prisoners. Ralph

de Guader retired into Britanny, where he poſſeſſed a large eſtate and extenſive authority.

William, who haſted to England, in order to ſuppreſs this rebellion, found, on his arrival, that this had been done in his abſence, and that nothing remained but the puniſhment of the rebels, many of whom he cauſed to be hanged; ſome of them had their hands cut off, and others their eyes put out. But, agreeably to his uſual maxim, he ſhewed more lenity to Roger, earl of Hereford, their leader, who was ſentenced to forfeit his eſtate, and to perpetual impriſonment. The king even ſeemed diſpoſed to grant him his liberty after a ſhort confinement, and, as a mark of his kindneſs, ſent him a rich preſent of garments from his own wardrobe; but he threw them into the fire: upon which the angry monarch ſwore that he would never releaſe him, and kept his oath. Waltheof, being an Engliſhman, was treated with leſs humanity: for, though he was not ſo guilty as the other conſpirators, and had atoned for his crime by an early return to his duty, William, inſtigated by his niece, ordered him to be tried, condemned, and executed, which was done on the 29th of April, 1075. The Engliſh, by whom he was extremely beloved, lamented his fate, and fancied that miracles were wrought by his relics, as a teſtimony of his innocence and piety. But the infamous Judith, his wife, falling ſoon after under the diſpleaſure of the king, was abandoned by every one, and paſſed the remainder of her life in contempt and remorſe.

William

William now haſted over to Normandy to gratify his revenge againſt Ralph de Guader, but found him ſo well ſupported by the king of France and the earl of Britanny, that, after beſieging him for ſome time in Dol, he was forced to abandon the enterprize, and to conclude a peace with thoſe princes, in which Ralph was included.

William, the moſt powerful, the moſt haughty, and the moſt active prince in Europe, was, amidſt all his ſplendid ſucceſſes, attacked by that enterprizing pontiff Gregory VII. but oppoſed the demands of that pope with great vigour. He vindicated, with inflexible firmneſs, the right of his crown, in giving inveſtitures to biſhops and abbots, and all other prerogatives in eccleſiaſtical matters, which his predeceſſors in Normandy had enjoyed; though he had to do with a pontiff who boldly aſſerted, "That "all civil power ought to be ſubject to eccleſi-"aſtical, and, upon the ſtrength of that doc-"trine, had formed a deſign of bringing all "the crowned heads in the Chriſtian world "under his ſubjection, and obliging them to "hold their kingdoms as fiefs of the Holy See, "and to govern them at his diſcretion."—Among other pretenſions of this kind, he laid claim to England as the patrimony of St. Peter, and, by Hubert his legate, required William to hold it of him as Supreme Lord, and to take an oath of fealty to him for it. But his anſwer was ſhort and peremptory: That he never had promiſed to take any ſuch oath, and that he could not find that it ever had been taken by

any of his predeceſſors, nor ſhould it be by him. He had, indeed, before he engaged in his enterprize againſt England, appealed to the pope as the beſt judge of political caſuiſtry, to get a confirmation of his claim to the crown, according to a practice much uſed in thoſe days in affairs of that nature; which Gregory VII. would have willingly conſtrued, as well as the payment of Peter-pence, which was an eleemoſynary gift, into an evidence of ſubjection to Rome; but he met with a ſpirit too high, and an underſtanding too ſtrong to admit ſuch concluſions. Nor did he only drop that abſurd pretenſion; but found it neceſſary to treat this prince with a reſpect which he did not vouchſafe to pay to any other in Europe. So far was William from conſidering himſelf as his vaſſal, that he would not allow the biſhops of England to go to Rome on his ſummons. And, though he affected to pay an outward reſpect to his clergy, he was always their maſter, and often their tyrant.

It has often been the fate of ambitious princes to be uneaſy in their own families, while they were fortunate and triumphant abroad; and this was the caſe of William. Robert, his eldeſt ſon, inherited all the bravery of his family, but without that policy and diſſimulation by which his father was diſtinguiſhed. Greedy of fame, impatient of contradiction, this prince could not bear to be controuled, even by his imperious father, and was not reſtrained by the checks of nature or duty from endeavouring to deprive him of his duchy of Normandy by force

of

of arms. That prince's pretenſions were grounded on a promiſe William had made, while he was ſolliciting aid from the court of France for the war he deſigned againſt England, that, if he ſhould ſucceed in that attempt, he would reſign his Norman dominions to his eldeſt ſon; which was probably thrown out only to quiet the jealouſy the French had conceived of his being too potent a vaſſal. But, whatever might be his motive, he did not perform it; nor could he indeed with ſafety: for, in the manner he thought fit to govern England, his being maſter of Normandy was neceſſary to ſecure his poſſeſſion of that kingdom. Robert waited ſome time without complaining; but the inſtigations of France working upon an unquiet temper of mind, drew him at length, ſays Lord Lyttelton, into an open rebellion, to force his royal father to make good a promiſe, which it was indecent for a ſon even to put him in mind of. When Robert demanded of him the execution of thoſe engagements, he gave him an abſolute refuſal in the homely phraſe, that he never intended to throw off his cloaths till he went to bed.

Robert openly declared his diſcontent, and was ſuſpected of engaging the king of France and the earl of Britanny to fruſtrate his father's attempts upon the town of Dol. Robert even entertained a jealouſy of his two ſurviving brothers William and Henry, who, by a greater ſubmiſſion, had acquired their father's affection; and the meereſt trifle produced a rupture between them. The three princes, who dwelt with their father in the caſtle of l'Aigle in Normandy, were

were one day playing; and, after ſome mirth and jollity, the two younger threw ſome water on Robert as he paſſed through the court; a frolic which he would probably have conſidered as innocent, had it not been for the ſuggeſtions of Alberic de Grentmeſnil, a young nobleman, who perſuaded the prince that this was meant as a public affront, which his honour obliged him to reſent; on which the choleric Robert, drawing his ſword, ran up ſtairs in order to be revenged on his brothers. The whole caſtle was in a tumult, which the king himſelf, who haſted from his apartment, found it difficult to appeaſe; but could not remove his eldeſt ſon's reſentment; who, complaining of his partiality, and fancying that he had received no proper ſatisfaction for the inſult, left the court that very evening, and proceeded to Rouen, in order to ſeize the citadel of that place. But, being diſappointed by the vigilance of the governor, he fled to Hugh de Neufchatel, a powerful Norman baron, who giving him protection, he openly levied war againſt his father. All the young nobility of Normandy, Maine, Anjou, and Britanny, took part with him, and it was even ſuſpected that Matilda, his mother, whoſe favourite he was, encouraged him in his rebellion, by ſending him ſecret remittances of money.

All William's hereditary provinces were, during ſeveral years, thrown into confuſion by this war; and he was at laſt conſtrained to have recourſe to England, whence he received an army of Engliſh, under his ancient captains, who

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ſoon expelled Robert and his adherents from their retreats, and reſtored his father's authority throughout all his dominions. The young prince was forced to take ſhelter in the caſtle of Gerberoy in the Beauvoiſis, where he was cloſely beſieged by his father; but, having a ſtrong garriſon, he made an obſtinate defence. Under the walls there paſſed many rencounters, which more nearly reſembled the ſingle combats of chivalry than the military actions of armies. In one of theſe Robert happened to engage the king, who was concealed by his helmet, and a fierce combat enſued, till at laſt the young prince wounded his father in the arm and unhorſed him, when William calling out for aſſiſtance, his ſon knew his voice, and ſtruck with remorſe and terror, inſtantly threw himſelf at his father's feet, begged his pardon, and offered to purchaſe his forgiveneſs by any atonement in his power. William, implacable in his reſentment, paid no regard to this dutiful ſubmiſſion, but giving him a curſe, mounted Robert's horſe by that prince's aſſiſtance, and returning to his camp, ſoon after raiſed the ſiege, and marched his army to Normandy, where, by the interpoſition of the queen, and other friends of both parties, he became reconciled to his ſon, whom he took with him into England, and entruſted him with the command of an army againſt Malcolm, king of Scotland. The Engliſh prince obliged the enemy to make his ſubmiſſion: about the ſame time, the Welch unable to reſiſt William's power, were obliged to make a compenſation for their incurſions, and

and the tranquillity of the iſland was fully ſettled.

This gave William leaſure to undertake a work, that does honour to his memory. In 1081 was begun a general ſurvey of all the lands in the kingdom, the extent of each diſtrict, with the proprietors, tenures, and value; the quantity of meadow, paſture, wood, and arable land which each diſtrict contained; and in ſome counties, the number of tenants, cottagers, and ſlaves of all denominations, who lived upon them. For this purpoſe he appointed commiſſioners, who entered every particular in their regiſter by the verdict of juries; and after ſix years labour, brought him an exact account of all the landed property in the kingdom. This monument, called Doom's Day book, is ſtill preſerved in the exchequer. The Great Alfred had finiſhed a like ſurvey of England in his time, which was long preſerved at Wincheſter, and probably ſerved as a model to William, in the conducting of this work.

The events during the remainder of William's reign, may be rather conſidered as domeſtic occurrences than national events. Odo, biſhop of Baieux, the king's half brother, whom he had created earl of Kent, and who enjoyed great power during his whole reign, had amaſſed immenſe riches; but not ſatisfied, he formed a chimerical project of buying the papacy; and though pope Gregory was not old, he confided ſo much in the predictions of an aſtrologer, that depending upon the pontiff's death, he flattered himſelf, that by his intrigues

intrigues and money, he ſhould obtain that eminent ſtate of greatneſs, and perſuaded many conſiderable barons to go with him to Italy, where he was to take all his treaſures, in hopes of his beſtowing on them more conſiderable eſtabliſhments in that country, as ſoon as he ſhould mount the papal throne. This project was carefully concealed from the king, who at laſt getting intelligence of the deſign, and not being pleaſed that his kingdom ſhould loſe ſo much of its wealth, came out of Normandy, found his brother in the iſle of Wight, and ordered him to be arreſted. His officers, out of regard to the privileges which the eccleſiaſtics now aſſumed, ſcrupled to execute the command, and the king was obliged to ſeize him in perſon. Odo inſiſted, that as he was a prelate, he was exempt from all temporal juriſdiction; but William replied, that he arreſted him not as biſhop of Baieux, but as earl of Kent. He then impeached Odo of many crimes in the execution of his office, which he had connived at before, and ſent him priſoner into Normandy, where he detained him in cuſtody during the remainder of his reign, notwithſtanding the remonſtrances and menaces of Gregory.

In 1083 the king was much afflicted by the death of Matilda, his conſort, whom he tenderly loved. Three years after, he paſſed into Normandy, taking with him Edgar Atheling, whom he allowed to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. While on the continent, he was detained by a miſunderſtanding between him and

and the king of France, occaſioned by dreadful inroads made by ſome French barons on the frontiers, into Normandy. The princes at that time were little able to reſtrain their licentious nobility, but William thought that they durſt not have provoked his reſentment, had they not been aſſured of Philip's countenance and protection; and his diſpleaſure was encreaſed, by hearing of ſome railleries which that monarch had thrown out againſt him. William, who was become corpulent, had for ſome time been detained in bed by ſickneſs, upon which Philip expreſſed his ſurprize, that his brother of England, ſhould be ſo long in being delivered of his big belly. The king ſent him word, that as ſoon as he was up, he would preſent ſo many lights at Notre Dame, as would perhaps give the king of France little pleaſure, alluding to the uſual practice at that time, of women, after lying in, preſenting wax tapers at the altar, upon their being churched. Immediately on his recovery, he marched with an army into the iſle of France, laying every thing waſte with fire and ſword, and taking the town of Mante, reduced it to aſhes.

The progreſs of theſe hoſtilities, were however ſtopped by a fatal accident. His horſe ſuddenly ſtarting aſide, he bruiſed his belly on the pummel of the ſaddle, which produced a rupture, and being in a bad habit of body, as well as advanced in years, he began to apprehend the conſequences, and gave orders for his being carried in a litter to the priory of St. Gervais, near Rouen. Finding his illneſs encreaſe,

creaſe, and being ſenſible of his approaching death, he diſcovered the vanity of all human grandeur, and was ſtruck with remorſe, for the horrible cruelties and acts of violence he had committed during the courſe of his reign, and endeavoured to atone for his crimes by making preſents to churches and monaſteries. He releaſed earl Morcar, and other Engliſh priſoners, and was even prevailed on, though not without reluctance, to ſet at liberty his brother Odo. He died on the 9th of September, in the year 1087, in the ſixty-third year of his age, the twenty-firſt of his reign over England, and the fifty-fourth over Normandy.

He left Normandy and Maine to his eldeſt ſon Robert, and wrote to Lanfranc, deſiring him to crown William king of England; but left nothing to Henry, except the poſſeſſions of his mother Matilda, though he foretold, that he would one day ſurpaſs his brother in power and opulence.

We ſhall take the character of this prince from the admirable pen of the late lord Lyttelton, who juſtly obſerves, that it has been ſeldom ſet in its true light; ſome eminent writers having been dazzled ſo much by the more ſhining parts of it, that they have hardly ſeen his faults; while others, out of a ſtrong deteſtation of tyranny, have been unwilling to allow him the praiſe he deſerves.

He may with juſtice be ranked among the greateſt generals any age has produced. There was united in him activity, vigilance, intrepi-

dity, caution, great force of judgment, and never-failing preſence of mind. He was ſtrict in his diſcipline, and kept his ſoldiers in perfect obedience, yet preſerved their affection. Having been, from his very childhood, continually in war, and at the head of armies, he joined to all the capacity that genius could give, all the knowledge and ſkill that experience could teach, and was a perfect maſter of the military art, as it was practiſed in the times wherein he lived. His conſtitution enabled him to endure any hardſhips; and very few were equal to him in perſonal ſtrength; which was an excellence of more importance than it is now, from the manner of fighting then in uſe. It is ſaid of him, that none except himſelf could bend his bow. His courage was heroic, and he poſſeſſed it, not only in the field, but (which is more uncommon) in the cabinet; attempting great things with means that, to other men, appeared totally unequal to ſuch undertakings, and ſteadily proſecuting what he had boldly reſolved; being never diſturbed or diſheartened with difficulties, in the courſe of his enterprizes; but having that noble vigour of mind, which, inſtead of bending to oppoſition, riſes againſt it, and ſeems to have a power of controuling and commanding fortune herſelf.

Nor was he leſs ſuperior to pleaſure than to fear. No luxury ſoftened him, no riot diſordered, no ſloth relaxed. It helped not a little to maintain the high reſpect his ſubjects had for him, that the majeſty of his character was never let down by any incontinence, or indecent

cent exceſs. His temperance and his chaſtity were conſtant guards, that ſecured his mind from all weakneſs, ſupported its dignity, and kept it always, as it were, on the throne. Through his whole life he had no partner of his bed but his queen: a moſt extraordinary virtue in one who had lived, even from his earlieſt youth, amidſt all the licence of camps, the allurements of a court, and the ſeductions of ſovereign power! Had he kept his oaths to his people, as well as he did his marriage vow, he would have been the beſt of kings: but he indulged other paſſions, of a worſe nature, and infinitely more detrimental to the public, than thoſe he reſtrained. A luſt of power which no regard to juſtice could limit, the moſt unrelenting cruelty, and the moſt inſatiable avarice poſſeſſed his ſoul. It is true, indeed, that among many acts of extreme inhumanity, ſome ſhining inſtances of great clemency may be produced, that were either effects of his policy, which taught him the method of acquiring friends, or of his magnanimity, which made him ſlight a weak and ſubdued enemy; ſuch as was Edgar Atheling, in whom he found neither ſpirit nor talents able to contend with him for the crown. But where he had no advantage, nor pride in forgiving, his nature diſcovered itſelf to be utterly void of all ſenſe of compaſſion; and ſome barbarities, which he committed, exceeded the bounds, that even tyrants and conquerors preſcribe to themſelves.

Moſt of our ancient hiſtorians, give him the character of a very religious prince; but his religion was, after the faſhion of thoſe times, belief without examination, and devotion without piety. It was a religion that prompted him to endow monaſteries, and at the ſame time allowed him to pillage kingdoms; that threw him on his knees before a relic or croſs, but ſuffered him unreſtrained to trample upon the liberties and rights of mankind.

As to his wiſdom in government, of which ſome modern writers have ſpoken very highly, he was indeed ſo far wiſe, that through a long and unquiet reign, he knew how to ſupport oppreſſion by terror, and employ the propereſt means for the carrying on a very iniquitous and violent adminiſtration. But that which alone deſerves the name of wiſdom in the character of a king, the maintaining of authority by the exerciſe of thoſe virtues which make the happineſs of his people, was what, with all his abilities, he does not appear to have poſſeſſed. Nor did he excel, in thoſe ſoothing and popular arts, which ſometimes change the complexion of a tyranny, and give it a fallacious appearance of freedom. His government was harſh and deſpotic, violating even the principles of that conſtitution which he himſelf had eſtabliſhed. Yet ſo far he performed the duty of a ſovereign, that he took care to maintain a good *police* in his realm; curbing licentiouſneſs with a ſtrong hand, which, in the tumultuous ſtate of his government, was a great and difficult work. How well he performed it, we

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may learn even from the teſtimony of a contemporary Saxon hiſtorian, who ſays, that during his reign a man might have travelled in perfect ſecurity all over the kingdom with his boſom full of gold, nor durſt any kill another in revenge of the greateſt offences, nor offer violence to the chaſtity of a woman. But it was a poor compenſation, that the highways were ſafe, when the courts of juſtice were dens of thieves, and when almoſt every man in authority, or in office, uſed his power to oppreſs and pillage the people. The king himſelf did not only tolerate, but encourage, ſupport, and even ſhare theſe extortions. Though the greatneſs of the ancient landed eſtate of the crown, and the feudal profits to which he was legally entitled, rendered him one of the richeſt monarchs in Europe, he was not content with all that opulence: but by authorizing the ſheriffs, who collected his revenues in the ſeveral counties, to practiſe the moſt grievous vexations and abuſes, for the raiſing of them higher; by a perpetual auction of the crown lands, ſo that none of his tenants could be ſecure of poſſeſſion, if any other would come and offer more; by various iniquities in the court of exchequer, which was entirely Norman; by forfeitures wrongfully taken; and laſtly, by arbitrary and illegal taxations, he drew into his treaſury much too great a proportion of the wealth of his kingdom.

It muſt however be owned, that if his avarice was inſatiably and unjuſtly rapacious, it was not meanly parſimonious, nor of that ſordid

did kind, which brings on a prince diſhonour and contempt. He ſupported the dignity of his crown with a decent magnificence; and though he never was laviſh, he ſometimes was liberal, more eſpecially to his ſoldiers and to the church. But looking on money as a neceſſary means of obtaining and encreaſing power, he deſired to accumulate as much as he could, rather, perhaps, from an ambitious, than a covetous nature: at leaſt his avarice was ſubſervient to his ambition, and he laid up wealth in his coffers, as he did arms in his magazines, to be drawn out when any proper occaſion required it, for the defence and enlargement of his dominions.

Upon the whole, he had many *great qualities*, but few *virtues*; and, if thoſe actions that more particularly diſtinguiſh the man or the king are impartially conſidered, we ſhall find, that in his character there is much to admire, but ſtill more to abhor.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

WILLIAM RUFUS.

The Right by which he aſcended the Throne. A Conſpiracy defeated by the King, who promiſed to remove the Grievances of the Engliſh. He invades Normandy, and is unhorſed by one of Prince Henry's Soldiers. Wars in Scotland. The Cruſades. The Acquiſition of Normandy. William quarrels with Anſelm, whom he had obliged to accept of the Biſhopric of Canterbury. The Death and Character of William Rufus.

WE ought to judge of the title which William Rufus had to the Engliſh crown, not by the idea of a ſtrict hereditary right, which a better policy has eſtabliſhed among us, but from the conſtitution of Normandy, where the duke had a power of appointing his ſucceſſor, provided it was done with the conſent of his barons. The Norman government was neither hereditary, according to the preſent ſenſe of that word, nor purely elective, but of a mixed nature, which partook of both. It was ſo far hereditary, that it was confined to one family, and ſo far elective, that out of that family, the duke had the option to name his heir, even the illegitimate not being excluded; and his nomination was valid, if confirmed by the barons, as it generally was, unleſs an extraordinary

nary objection occurred. Nor did the Engliſh cuſtoms differ from the Norman, as to the right of ſucceſſion; except, that in England minors had uſually been ſet aſide: but there alſo the crown had been often diſpoſed of by teſtamentary ſettlements, approved by the nation in the witenagemot, or parliament, and ſometimes by their election, without regard to a lineal deſcent.

William, ſurnamed Rufus, or the Red, from the colour of his hair, had no ſooner procured his father's recommendatory letter to Lanfranc, than he made ſuch haſte into England, that he did not even ſtay to attend upon the ceremony of the interment. Lanfranc, beſides being archbiſhop of Canterbury, had the moſt amiable character: the Engliſh thought him their friend, for his humanity made him one to all in diſtreſs; and the Normans were ſenſible, that he had uſed the king's favour, to moderate and reſtrain the violence of his temper.

The archbiſhop had a paternal regard for William Rufus, whom he himſelf had educated, and had even conferred on him the order of knighthood; yet required from him ſome extraordinary ſecurities; which William, who feared that any delay might be hurtful, very readily gave, ſwearing to Lanfranc himſelf, and engaging ſome of his friends to become pledges for him, that he would govern the realm with juſtice and mercy, and defend againſt all men the ſafety, peace, and liberty of the church. Having thus gained that prelate,

late, he immediately got poſſeſſion of the royal treaſure, laid up in the palace at Wincheſter, amounting to fifty thouſand pounds weight of ſilver in coin, beſides gold, jewels, plate, and robes that belonged to the crown. The archbiſhop having aſſembled ſeveral of the prelates, and the principal nobility, they, from the reſpect they paid to his father's appointment, haſtily concurred in his coronation, which was performed by Lanfranc, at Weſtminſter, on the twenty-ſeventh of September 1087. Soon after which, as his father's executor, he gave a bountiful alms to every church in the kingdom, and to the poor in each county; which, though bequeathed by that monarch for the benefit of his own ſoul, was of advantage to William Rufus, and was, indeed, a bribe to the people. But the Engliſh were more inclined to him than his brother; for as he had reſided longer in England, he was thought more an Engliſhman, and had endeared himſelf to them by a behaviour more agreeable to their temper and manners. He therefore found no difficulty in bringing them to ſupport his pretenſions. The clergy were induced by Lanfranc to favour his title, and before the end of the year, all the vaſſals of the crown having confirmed it in parliament, ſwore fealty and homage to him, without any one diſſenting voice being heard.

William had not reigned many months, when his throne was ſhaken by a ſudden and almoſt general conſpiracy of the great Norman lords, who forſook him, though he had

yet

yet done nothing to offend them, and paid no regard to the oaths they had taken, eſpouſing the cauſe of duke Robert, who had already taken peaceable poſſeſſion of Normandy. The only reaſon they aſſigned for this revolt, was the apprehenſion of weakening their ſecurity here, by the ſeparation of Normandy from the kingdom of England. They were generally poſſeſſed of large eſtates in both countries, and were uneaſy at their ſeparation, foreſeeing, that it would be impoſſible for them to preſerve long their allegiance to two maſters, whence they muſt neceſſarily reſign either their ancient patrimony, or their new acquiſitions. This was ſtrongly enforced to them by Odo, biſhop of Baieux, the king's uncle, who being ſet at liberty, William Rufus reſtored him to his earldom and lands, but did not inveſt him with any power, which, to a man of his temper, was an unpardonable offence, and induced him to employ all his talents in endeavouring to transfer the crown to Robert. The conſpirators retired to their caſtles, haſtily put themſelves in a poſture of defence, and expecting to be ſoon ſupported by a powerful army from Normandy, already began hoſtilities in many places.

In this extremity, William had no reſource but the Engliſh, and therefore more powerfully to engage their affections, he not only careſſed them, but engaged himſelf to them, by the ſtrongeſt aſſurances, that he would give them better laws than had ever before been eſtabliſhed in England; take off all illegal taxes,

taxes, and reſtore their ancient freedom of hunting in the royal foreſts.

This raiſed him an army of 30,000 men, with which he took the field, and ſuddenly marched into Kent, where his uncle, Odo, and Robert earl of Montague, had already ſeized the fortreſſes of Rocheſter and Pevenſey. Theſe he reduced by famine; and though he was prevailed on to ſpare the lives of the rebels, he confiſcated their eſtates, and baniſhed them the kingdom. He at the ſame time uſed all poſſible means to win over the greateſt of the Norman nobility, and break their confederacy, offering them privately any money or lands they deſired; and remonſtrating to them, "that they ought to take care how they "impeached his right to the crown, ſince the "ſame prince who had made them earls, had "made him king." There was much force in this argument, and it did him good ſervice. Lanfranc, alſo, who had their confidence, became ſurety for him, that he ſhould redreſs all the grievances they had complained of under the government of his father; and ſeeing the Engliſh ſo affectionate to him, they grew jealous, that if he ſhould be ſupported by the arms of the Engliſh alone, he might become more an Engliſhman than, for their own intereſt, they wiſhed him to be. By theſe conſiderations, ſome of the principal nobles were fixed to his party, and others returned to it, who had at firſt left him. While the clergy in general ſtrongly adhered to him, out of regard to their primate.

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In the mean time, a large body of forces were ſent by Robert from Normandy, while he himſelf was preparing to come over with a greater embarkation; but this body of troops was deſtroyed in the channel by the ſhips which guarded the coaſt; which ſo intimated the duke, that it ſtopped his deſign. William loſt no time in attacking the conſpirators, and ſoon compelled all the chiefs among them to quit the realm; after which the whole nation ſubmitted quietly to him, under the hope and aſſurance of a good government.

His conduct did not, at firſt, contradict the expectations of the nation; but after ſome time, proſperity diſcovered thoſe corrupt diſpoſitions which policy and fear had made him conceal. This change was accelerated by the death of Lanfranc, who died the next year with a great reputation for piety, learning, and parts: but he had made an unhappy uſe of his talents, by becoming the principal champion againſt Berangerius, for the new doctrine of tranſubſtantiation, which was unknown to the church of England at the beginning of this century, as is inconteſtibly proved by the epiſtles and canons of Ælfric, archbiſhop of Canterbury, and by the prayers and homilies uſed at that time. Yet he refuſed to go to Rome againſt his ſovereign's orders; anſwering the pope, who very imperiouſly ſummoned him thither, that the laws of England would not permit him to leave it without the king's conſent; and perſiſting in his refuſal, though threatened by his holineſs with a ſuſpenſion. He likewiſe aſſiſted

aſſiſted his maſter in maintaining all the other points of ſupremacy, that were diſputed between him and that arrogant pontiff.

After this prelate's death, William Rufus, whoſe paſſions had been curbed by his habitual reſpect for the gentle authority of his virtuous preceptor, grew more bold in his vices, and more impatient of any councils delivered with freedom: yet for ſome time, his great and good qualities were ſo mixed with his bad, that people were at a loſs what judgment to form of him. But ſoon an immenſe prodigality, which he was forced to ſupport by rapine and extortion, which, with the inſtigations of a miniſter worſe than himſelf, made the latter years of his reign, a continued ſeries of grievous oppreſſions.

This miniſter was Ralph Flambard, a Norman, who had been advanced by William the Firſt, from the dregs of the people, to be one of his vaſſals, and became ſuch a favourite with this king, that he was placed at the head of the adminiſtration; and to the ſcandal of the Engliſh church, was made biſhop of Durham. His merit conſiſted in a forward enterprizing ſpirit, great eloquence, a taſte for the pleaſures his maſter loved, and a very fertile invention of ways and means for the raiſing of money, with a perfect inſenſibility to the complaints of the people, and a daring contempt of the reſentment of the nobles. He had ſcarce any learning, and not even an external ſhew of religion: but he had an agreeable wit, was a ſkilful courtier, a ſubtle lawyer, and a mag-

nificent prelate. Under his power, the commons of England, inſtead of being relieved from their grievances, according to the king's promiſe, were harraſſed with worſe exactions, than thoſe they had borne under Odo. The whole nation now felt, more inſupportably than ever, what heavy burdens the feudal laws could, by arbitrary conſtructions, impoſe on the ſubjects. They firſt fell upon the great Norman lords, but the evil did not ſtop there: Whatever demands the king made on his vaſſals, they made on theirs; whatever powers he exerciſed, they likewiſe claimed, and often abuſed ſtill more than he. Thus the feudal ſyſtem became a chain of arbitrary oppreſſion, under which all ſuffered much, but the loweſt moſt. On the other hand, every thing was ſold by the king and his miniſters; benefices, biſhoprics, juſtice itſelf; and when all other means were exhauſted, confiſcations, the laſt and worſt reſource of a prodigal tyrant, were ſought for, under various pretences.

In 1090 the king reſolved to attack Normandy, where the negligent adminiſtration of the duke had rendered that territory a ſcene of violence and outrage. Walter and Odo, two of the Norman barons, were bribed by William, to deliver into his hands the fortreſſes of St. Valeri and Albemarle: others ſoon imitated their example. The duke had alſo reaſon to apprehend danger from the intrigues of his brother Henry, who, while he was making his preparations againſt England, had furniſhed him with the ſum of three thouſand marks, in return

return for which he put him in poſſeſſion of the Cotentin, which included near a third part of the duchy of Normandy; but afterwards threw him into priſon. But, finding himſelf expoſed to an invaſion from England, he gave Henry his liberty, and even made uſe of his aſſiſtance in ſuppreſſing the inſurrections of his rebellious ſubjects. A conſpiracy had been entered into by Conan, a rich citizen of Rouen, to deliver that city to William; but this being diſcovered, Henry took the traitor up to a high tower, and with his own hands flung him from the battlements.

William appearing in Normandy at the head of an army, the nobility on both ſides, being ſtrongly connected by their intereſt and alliances, interpoſed, and brought about an accommodation. This was of the greateſt advantage to William, who obtained poſſeſſion of the territory of Eu, the towns of Aumale, Feſcamp, and other places; in return for which he promiſed to aſſiſt his brother in ſubduing Maine, which had revolted, and that the Norman barons, attainted for engaging in Robert's cauſe, ſhould be reſtored to the poſſeſſion of their eſtates in England. The two brothers alſo agreed, that, on the demiſe of either without iſſue, the ſurvivor ſhould inherit all his dominions.

Prince Henry, enraged that, in this accommodation, no care had been taken of his intereſt, retired to a ſtrong fortreſs on the coaſt of Normandy, called St. Michael's mount, whence he infeſted the neighbourhood with his incurſions. Robert and William beſieged him with

their joint forces; and, when he was ready to give up the place for want of water, Robert, hearing of his diſtreſs, allowed him to ſupply himſelf, and even ſent him ſome pipes of wine for his own table. William reproving him for this ill-timed generoſity, he replied, "What, "ſhall I ſuffer my brother to die of thirſt? where "ſhall we find another when he is gone?" During this ſiege, William, ſeeing a ſmall party of horſe belonging to the garriſon approach near his camp, was ſo tranſported by the ardour of his courage, that he furiouſly advanced before his own troops, and charged into the midſt of them. His horſe was killed under him, and the ſoldier who had diſmounted him, not knowing who he was, dragged him by the foot on the ground, and was going to ſlay him, if he had not ſtopped the blow by ſaying, with the voice of authority, "Raſcal, lift me up: I am "the king of England." At theſe words, the ſoldiers of prince Henry, his brother, were ſtruck with awe, and reverently raiſing him up from the earth, brought him another horſe. By this time his own forces were come to his ſuccour in ſuch numbers, that the little band of the enemy could make no reſiſtance, much leſs carry off the king as their priſoner. William, ſeeing this, vaulted into the ſaddle, and caſting his eyes, which ſparkled with fire, all around him, aſked who it was that unhorſed him? For ſome time all were ſilent, but at laſt he who did it anſwered, "It was I, who did not ſuppoſe "you to be a king, but an ordinary knight." "By the face of our Lord," replied William, with

with a ſmile, "thou ſhalt henceforth be my "ſoldier, and receive from me the recompence "thy valour deſerves." Prince Henry was ſoon after obliged to capitulate, and, being ſtripped of all his patrimony, wandered about for ſome time in poverty, with few attendants.

To this Norman war, which was ſo ſoon concluded, there ſucceeded hoſtilities with Scotland. Robert here commanded his brother's army, and obliged Malcolm to accept a peace, and do homage to the crown of England for the fiefs he held of that crown. But two years after, new differences breaking out, upon the nature of the ſervice, that prince invaded England; and, after ravaging Northumberland, laid ſiege to Alnwick, where a party of earl Mowbray's troops, commanded by a knight named Morel, attacking him by ſurprize, a ſharp action enſued, in which both Malcolm and his ſon were ſlain.

This prince, among many other public and private virtues, was poſſeſſed of an admirable greatneſs of mind, of which the following fact is an evident proof: Malcolm having received information, that one of his nobles had formed a deſign againſt his life, he enjoined the informer to obſerve the ſtricteſt ſilence, and took no notice of it himſelf, till the perſon accuſed came to his court in order to execute his deſign. The next morning he went to hunt, with all the train of his courtiers, and, when they were got into the deepeſt woods of the foreſt, drew that nobleman away from the reſt of the company, and thus ſpoke to him: "Behold! we

"are here alone, armed, and mounted alike. "Nobody ſees, or hears us, or can give either "of us aid againſt the other. If then you are "a brave man, if you have courage and ſpirit, "perform your purpoſe; accompliſh the pro- "miſe you have made to my enemies. If you "think I ought to be killed by you, where "can you do it better? when more opportu- "nity? when more manfully?—Have you pre- "pared poiſon for me? that is a womaniſh "treaſon.—Or would you murder me in my "bed? an adultereſs could do that.—Or have "you hid a dagger to ſtab me ſecretly? that is "the deed of a ruffian.—Rather act like a ſol- "dier; act like a man; and fight with me "hand to hand; that your treaſon may, at "leaſt, be free from baſeneſs." At theſe words, the traitor, as if he had been ſtruck with a thunderbolt, fell at his feet, and implored his pardon. "Fear nothing: you ſhall not ſuffer any "evil from me;" replied the king; and he kept his word. This noble-minded prince is charged with no other fault, but his making war, in his in- curſions into England, in too barbarous a manner.

The death of Malcolm, for ſome years, in- terrupted the regular ſucceſſion to the Scottiſh crown; for, though he left legitimate ſons, his brother Donald, on account of their youth, was raiſed to the throne; but, ſoon after, Duncan, Malcolm's natural ſon, formed a conſpiracy againſt him, and, being aſſiſted by William with a ſmall force, obtained poſſeſſion of the kingdom.

In Normandy new broils aroſe, owing to the frank, open, and remiſs temper of Robert; and

William,

William, going over to Normandy, in 1094, to ſupport his partizans, ordered an army of 20,000 men to be raiſed in England, and to be conducted to the ſea-coaſt, where Ralph Flambard, the king's miniſter, exacted ten ſhillings * from each inſtead of their ſervice, and then diſmiſſed them into their ſeveral counties. This money was ſo advantageouſly employed by William, that he reaped greater advantage from it, than he could have expected from the army. By new preſents he engaged the French king to forſake Robert, and bribed the Normans to deſert his ſervice; but was prevented from puſhing his advantages by an invaſion of the Welch, which called him back to England, where he eaſily repelled the enemy, but was unable to make any conſiderable impreſſion on a country guarded by its mountainous ſituation.

At this time, a conſpiracy of his own barons appeared a more ſerious concern, and engroſſed his whole attention: Robert Mowbray, earl of Northumberland, was at its head, and engaged in it the count d'Eu, Richard de Tunbrige, Roger de Lacy, and many others. It is remarkable, that though the conſpirators reſolved to dethrone William, it was not with a view of raiſing Robert to the throne, but Stephen, count of Aumale, his father's nephew. William's diſpatch diſconcerted the conſpirators. Mowbray made ſome reſiſtance; but, being taken priſoner, was attainted and thrown into priſon, where he died about thirty years after. The count d'Eu denied his being concerned in this

* Every ſhilling then weighed three of our ſhillings.

rebellion,

rebellion, and, to juſtify himſelf, fought Geoffrey Bainard, his accuſer, but, being worſted in the combat, was ſentenced to be caſtrated, and to have his eyes put out.

Theſe petty wars and commotions now gave way to the noiſe of the cruſades, which engroſſed the attention of Europe, and were the moſt ſignal inſtance of folly that ever diſgraced human nature. After Mahomet had, by his new religion, united the diſperſed Arabs under one head, they iſſued from their deſarts, ſubdued a great part of the eaſtern empire, and conquered Jeruſalem. The Chriſtians had then the mortification to ſee the places conſecrated by the preſence of the Divine Author of their religion fallen into the poſſeſſion of infidels: but the Arabs, or Saracens, gave little diſturbance to thoſe zealous devotees, who ſtill flocked to Jeruſalem, and allowed every man, after paying a ſmall tribute, to viſit the holy ſepulchre, to perform what he eſteemed his religious duties, and to return in peace. But the Turcomans, or Turks, who were a tribe of Tartars, having at length embraced the Mahometan religion, and taken Syria from the Saracens, became maſters of Jeruſalem, and rendered the pilgrimages of the Chriſtians much more difficult and dangerous, the pilgrims being expoſed to inſults, robberies, and extortions. Hence thoſe zealots, on their return from theſe pilgrimages, filled Chriſtendom with indignation againſt the infidels, who profaned the holy city by their preſence, and derided the ſacred myſteries in the very place of their completion.

While

While the people were exaſperated by theſe reports, Peter, who was commonly called the Hermit, had made a pilgrimage to Jeruſalem, and being deeply affected by the dangers and oppreſſions to which the pilgrims were expoſed, formed the bold deſign of leading into Aſia armies ſufficient to ſubdue thoſe powerful and warlike nations, which now held the holy city in ſubjection. This he propoſed to pope Martin II. who, on this occaſion, ſummoned a council at Placentia, which conſiſted of 4000 eccleſiaſtics, and 30,000 ſeculars, and was held in a plain, where the ſpeeches of the pope, and of Peter himſelf, repreſenting the deplorable ſituation of the Chriſtians in the Eaſt, and the indignity of allowing the holy city to be in the hands of infidels, had ſuch an effect, that the whole multitude ſuddenly and violently declared for a war againſt them, and ſolemnly devoted themſelves to the performance of a ſervice which they eſteemed ſo meritorious in the ſight of God.

Though Italy appeared to enter with ſuch zeal into the deſign, Martin was ſenſible that, to inſure its ſucceſs, it was neceſſary to enliſt the more powerful and warlike nations in the ſame cauſe: Peter, therefore, by his direction, viſited the chief cities and ſovereigns of Chriſtendom; after which he ſummoned another council at Clermont in Auvergne. The fame of this great deſign now procured the attendance of the greateſt princes, prelates, and nobles; and, when the pope and the hermit had renewed their enthuſiaſtic exhortations, the whole aſſembly, as if inſpired with the ſame ſpirit, exclaimed,

claimed, as with one voice, "It is the will of "God; it is the will of God:" words which were ſo firmly believed to flow from a divine inſpiration, that, in all the exploits of thoſe adventurers, they were uſed as the ſignal of battle. Men of all ranks took arms with the utmoſt ardour, and the ſign of the croſs became the badge of union, all who enliſted in this ſacred war affixing it to their right ſhoulder.

At this time Europe was ſunk into profound ignorance and ſuperſtition; the eccleſiaſtics had an unlimited power over the mind; the people, who had abandoned themſelves to the greateſt crimes and diſorders, knew of no other expiation than the obſervances impoſed on them by their ſpiritual paſtors; and the holy war was eaſily repreſented as an equivalent for all penances, and an atonement for every vice. Hence all orders of men, deeming the cruſades the only road to heaven, enliſted themſelves under theſe ſacred banners: nobles, artizans, peaſants, and even prieſts enrolled their names; and the declining of this meritorious ſervice was branded with impiety, cowardice, and puſilanimity. Women themſelves, concealing their ſex under the diſguiſe of armour, attended the camp, and frequently, abandoning all thoughts of decency, proſtituted themſelves without reſerve to the army. Even the greateſt criminals were forward in a ſervice, which they conſidered as a ſatisfaction for all their crimes; and, during the courſe of theſe expeditions, the moſt enormous diſorders were committed by men, enured to wickedneſs, encouraged by example, and impelled by neceſſity. The

The number of the adventurers ſoon became ſo great, that their wiſeſt leaders, Hugh, count of Vermandois, brother to the king of France, Stephen, count of Blois, Godfrey of Bouillon, prince of Brabant, and Raymond, count of Thouloufe, began to fear leſt the greatneſs itſelf of the armament ſhould defeat its purpoſe. They therefore ſuffered an undiſciplined multitude, computed at 300,000 men, to go before them, under the command of Peter the Hermit, and Walter the Moneyleſs. Theſe took the road through Hungary and Bulgaria, toward Conſtantinople; and truſting that heaven would ſupply all their neceſſities by ſupernatural aſſiſtance, they made no proviſion for their ſubſiſtence on their march. Hence they ſoon found themſelves obliged to obtain by plunder, what they had in vain expected from miracles; on which the enraged inhabitants of the countries through which they paſſed aſſembling in arms, ſlaughtered them with very little reſiſtance. Afterwards followed the more diſciplined armies, who paſſed the ſtreights of Conſtantinople, and moſt of them periſhed in the plains of Aſia. The whole number amounted to 700,000 men.

In the midſt of this univerſal infatuation, men did not entirely forget their preſent intereſt. From the romantic ſpirit of that age, the nobles, who engaged in theſe enterprizes, hoped to form rich eſtabliſhments in the eaſt, which was at that time the chief ſeat of arts and commerce; and with this view ſold at the loweſt price their ancient caſtles and eſtates, which,

in

in their eyes, had now loſt all their value; while the greater princes, who ſtaid at home, got rid of many of their moſt turbulent ſubjects, and at the ſame time took the opportunity of annexing to the crown many conſiderable fiefs, either by purchaſe, or the want of heirs. But none made a more immediate advantage of this epidemic phrenzy, than the king of England.

Robert, duke of Normandy, animated by this univerſal enthuſiaſm, inliſted himſelf in the cruſade; but finding it would be impracticable for him to appear at the head of his numerous vaſſals and ſubjects, in a manner ſuitable to his rank and ſtation, he reſolved to mortgage his dominions, and offered them to his brother for the ſum of ten thouſand marks *. The bargain was ſoon concluded, and the money was raiſed by the king's extorting it from his ſubjects of all ranks, and even the convents were obliged to melt down their plate, in order to furniſh the quota demanded of them. William was now put in poſſeſſion of Normandy and Maine, while Robert ſet out with a magnificent train for the Holy Land, in purſuit of glory, and filled with confidence of ſecuring his eternal happineſs.

* The mark at that time was two-thirds of a pound of ſilver, that is, twice the value of our preſent pound ſterling.

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